

# THE FORUM GAZETTE

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## Punish the Guilty Release the Innocent

**A**s announced, 51 persons, drawn mainly from the North of Delhi, sat on *satyagrah* from 8.00 AM to 6.00PM on 16 November. The leader of the *Satyagrah* was Lt. Gen J S Aurora (retd.). His wife also joined the *Satyagrah* on the opening day.

The two principal demands are—punishment of those guilty of November 1984, killing and the release of the Jodhpur detenus. These two demands are more than three years old and it is a shame that the government has shown neither inclination nor the administrative competence to attend to them in a democratic and just manner.

By a curious coincidence it is now proposed to launch a case against Shri Sajjan Kumar, ex-Member of Parliament and currently General Secretary of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee. His role in the November 1984, killings is notorious. What is more, it is fairly well documented. It is astonishing that even after the concerned committee had recommended that a case be launched against him, all kinds of procedural and other obstacles are being created and the launching of the prosecution is being delayed. Without exaggeration, the bonafides of the Central government are on trial. Unless the case is launched speedily and prosecuted with sincerity and vigour, nobody is going to believe that the Central government intends to do its duty.

In the month-long *Satyagrah* that has been launched the Sikh Forum has been promised cooperation by various other democratic organisations, particularly those committed to the cause of civil liberties and

democratic rights. This support is valuable in the extreme and is acknowledged with gratitude.

Thousands of people have promised to participate in this peaceful and non-violent *Satyagrah*. For full 30 days the present programme of *Satyagrah* will be pursued. Depending upon the political situation in the country and various other factors it would be decided at the end of the month what next requires to be done and how best it can be done.

**O**n the eve of launching the month long agitation to demand punishment for the guilty and release of innocent, Lt Gen. J.S. Aurora president Sikh forum issued the following press statement.

The Punjab problem continues to be intractable and defies solution. While terrorism in the state is certainly a cause for worry, attempts to deal with it purely as a law and order issue can succeed only marginally. Basically it is political and has to be resolved as such.

What is providing sustenance to terrorism are several

indefensible policies of the Central Government. The most important of them is its deliberate failure to punish those responsible for the November '84 massacre in Delhi and other places in the country. The Misra Commission was totally a farce. And what has happened by way of a follow-up in not pursuing the case against the former Congress MP, Shri Sajjan Kumar, is most reprehensible.

Next, but no less important, is the continued incarceration of hundreds of innocent persons in Jodhpur jail and elsewhere. It is believed that there are nearly 5000 persons behind the bars without any trial in Punjab jails. In their case detention is relatively recent, but in the case of Jodhpur detenus more than three years have already gone by and no steps have yet been taken, even to start prosecution.

The situation has become so untenable that all those who have the good of the nation at heart are appalled and angry. State terrorism has become a fact of life. All kinds of excesses are being committed by the police in the name of combating terrorism. Rarely an attempt is made to restrain or punish



Volunteers of Punjab Action Committee proceeding for Court Arrest

those who are guilty of them. This is leading to a situation where the state has been brutalised. No initiative is contemplated to work out a political solution. This is in sharp contrast to the policy adopted in Sri Lanka where it was recognised that a political solution is the only answer. The Prime Minister even went out of his way to sign an agreement with President Jaywardene without effectively binding the Tamil militants led by the LTTE. But when it comes to Punjab, a different yardstick is applied

and this is what continues to alienate the Sikhs from the national mainstream.

In order to focus attention on some of these problems, the Sikh Forum has decided to launch a month long programme of relay hunger-strike with effect from 16th November, 1987. Every day 51 persons, mostly from Delhi but also from the rest of India, would sit on hunger-strike from 8.00 AM to 7.00 PM. Between 1-2PM the *satyagrahis* and public will be addressed by prominent

*Continued on page 4*

## Freedom of Press Under Challenge

H. G. Desh Pande

**O**n November 14, the birth day of Jawaharlal Nehru two events happened in the media world. One was the resumption of the publication of Congress controlled English daily 'National Herald' and the other the beginning of the process of take over of Indian Express building by the government. Was this a coincidence or a declaration that now onward dissent will be muzzled by the government and ruling party's image will be projected with the help of state power? These questions are being generally asked in some journalistic circles.

While releasing the first issue of the Delhi edition of National Herald the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, regretted that professionalism in news papers was tampered either by industrial houses, or alien

ideologies. He said that, media as it is today was influenced by certain vested interests. It may be right. But in a democracy how the influence of vested interests has to be encountered remains a very important question.

The way the government is dealing with Indian Express starting from raids in the offices of the group and its proprietors to the notices by the government to tenants in the Express building asking them not to pay their rents to the Express management needs consideration.

Unfortunately a section of the Journalists have been trapped. In view of strike by the Indian Express employees, known lukewarm attitude of Mr. Goeneka towards workers welfare and managements attempts to break the strike with

the help of B.J.P. workers have made the express workers in particular and News papermen in general, understandably bitter. The IFWJ itself has appealed to the government for take over of the financial management of the Express group.

While one need not and cannot justify all the stands or opinions of the Express management or reporting can employees interest be allowed to be used as a pretext for closing down a news paper? How much is government concerned for the welfare of employees can well be seen from its treatment of striking doctors and teachers recently. Therefore governments action has to be viewed independently of employees strike and managements ill treatment of workers. The only understandable reason is "teaching

a lesson to the dissenter.

It should also be kept in mind that the dramatic development of take over of the Express building came at a time when the paper, reportedly, was on the verge of getting the on-going employees strike called off. According to reports 17 members of the executive committee of employees union have opposed union president T. Nagarajan's unbending stance in continuing the strike. This only suggests that government's purpose is to stop resumption of the publication of the paper.

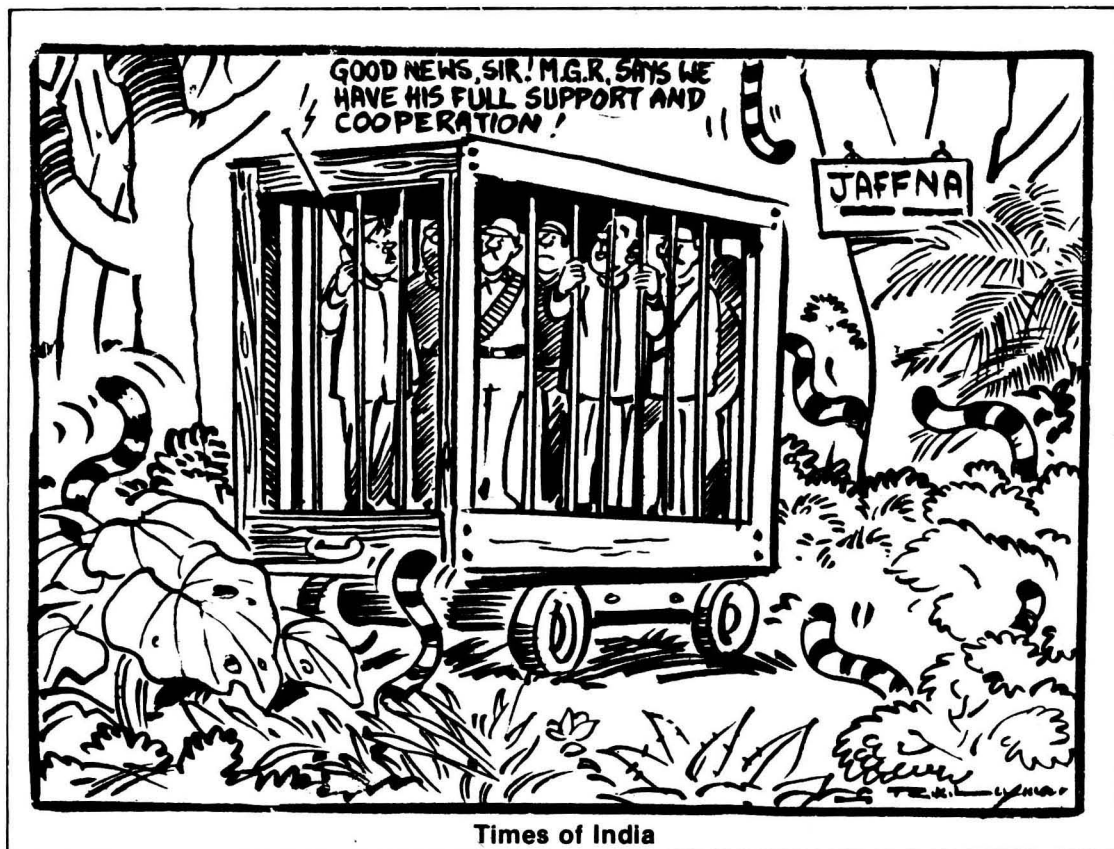
Dissent may not be always right but it is the most essential characteristic of democracy. Thus attack on any one dissenter cannot be seen in isolation. It is warning for others. In case of press it is particularly so. Freedom of press from all sorts of intervention, government's including, is first essential for professionalism for which Prime Minister feels concerned.

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## Cartoons of the Fortnight



**T**rue Veer Bahadur Singh to think of it. UP's wily chief minister has conjured up a new gimmick to keep himself in favour with the Congress high command. He has just set up a Priyanka Gandhi Seva Samiti—Rajiv Gandhi's daughter, in his opinion, is the best person to lead the country's school children. What will he come up with next? A made-to-order soccer side for the football buff Rahul?



## SOUND AND FURY

Do they want to create another Sri Lanka in Darjeeling?  
—Mr. Jyoti Basu about the GNL

Peace is not war. The army is not diplomacy nor law nor politics.  
—Mr. Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer.

These are a post-dated cheque on a bank account they don't have.

—External Affairs Ministry spokesman on the LTTE's peace offers.

The question now is whether the Indians, having won a battle, can win the war.

—The Guardian

You escaped death by a few inches and I escaped death by a few seconds.

—Mr. Jayewardene to Mr. Rahiv Gandhi in Kathmandu

The country's politics has become sick and, like a sick patient, it can digest only a "Kichri" government.

—Mr. H.N. Bahuguna

I can't go to the bathroom without giving a lecture.

—Professor J.K. Galbraith.

The cyanide capsules and thegrenades around the necks of 10 year-old girls make me wonder whether the similarity between the Tamil Tigers and theNazies is not superficial but has some basis.

Defence analyst K. Subrahmanyam in the Times of India.

We do not in the least claim a monopoly of the truth—

Mikhail Gorbachev

If they (the Indian Peace-keeping Force) want to show off their strenght, why not the Indian soldiers go and get back our territory from China?

M. Karunanidhi, DMK chief

It is no longer appropriate to describe it (the IPKF) as a "peace-keeping force".

Editorial In The Statesman, on the IPKF playing a full-fledged role of an army in Sri Lanka

I feel very sad whenever the police enter the Golden Temple, but I feel more sad about the presence of the terrorists and their brutal activities within the complex.

Jiwan Singh Umanangal, vice-president of Akali Dal (L)

The harsh truth is that the people have lost confidence in the ability of the government to protect them.

—K.R. Sundar Rajan, Columnist

If rajiv Gandhi can send help to close down the paper, I have every right to seek outside help to counter that.

Arun Shourie, editor, Indian Express

I think that the Centre is being provided with wrong information and wrong data.

S.S. Barnala, former Punjab CM

### All in the game



... I appreciate his intentions... at least he turned up for talks...

The Hindu

### You said it by Laxman



And that's the end of Sri Lankan news. So sorry, no time left for Indian news!

Times of India

## THE **FORUM** GAZETTE

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### NEWSHOUND



### By Rap





- Minority Rights
- Civil Liberties
- Equality for Women
- Democratic Values
- Environmental Protection

## An Act of Collusion

The President rule has been extended by another six months in Punjab. This had been talked of for quite sometime. Than who had been watching the situation in that state could see it clearly that the Centre had made up its mind to crush terrorism and this was the way it proposed to go about it.

It should not be necessary to say much with regard to terrorism. Terrorism will certainly get weakened and it is getting weakened. But for anyone to imagine that terrorism would be rooted out is to assume too much. While old terrorists are getting liquidated, new ones are being born. Whether they also become a menace in course of time or not will depend upon not the way terrorism is dealt with but the way the situation is politically resolved. That is why, all those people who do not feel committed to the present line of approach adopted by the ruling party usually refer to a political settlement of the problem.

Let us get two things clear. One is in regard to the ghost of Khalistan. The ghost of Khalistan has haunted the Indian polity for a number of years. As argued repeatedly in these columns, it is a ghost and not a reality. Some people were certainly for Khalistan but their number was not very large. After Operation Bluestar their numbers certainly went up and even today their number is significantly higher than it was before 1984. But as events have shown, the number of people who are committed to Khalistan is so small that to treat Khalistan as a central issue in Punjab is to totally misread the situation.

Secondly, what keeps the terrorists going then? It is not the urge for Khalistan but it is the collusion between the Central government and the terrorists. The Central government has done everything possible to strengthen the hands of the terrorists. A part of the terrorists strength derives from the training facilities and weapons obtained from elsewhere. Even funding from abroad could be put down under that head. But the essential impetus to it comes from the sense of alienation that the Sikhs have had for several years now.

It was in November 1982 that the Sikhs were harassed and humiliated while travelling through Haryana. The Akalis had certainly given a call to boycott the Asian Games. But all Sikhs were not Akalis. What the government did was to equate the two and treat all Sikhs as if they were Akalis. In consequence, they did become Akalis, at least the majority of them because they had been treated in the same indiscriminating way as the Akalis had maintained that they would be treated. That was the starting point and since then everything that has happened including Operation Bluestar and the November 1984 killings has served to achieve the same purpose; obliterate the line of distinction between the Akalis and the Sikhs.

Even a casual visitor to Punjab today is struck by two things. The Sikhs do not hesitate to say that the terrorists while playing a heroic role are doing a disservice to the community. Even if everybody does not say so, a substantial number do say so. This is a development which has become more noticeable during the last year or so than had been the case earlier. The explanation is simple. With the passage of time more and more of them are beginning to see that terrorism is self-destructive and that is not have political struggle is waged.

What the Hindus have to say is equally instructive. More and more of them say it that the November, 1984, killings have so profoundly influenced the Sikhs psyche in Punjab that a good deal of the support that the terrorists are getting today is because of the sense of alienation that started with that killing.

Equally important is the way the police and the CRP are functioning in that state. In theory they belong to a disciplined force. In practice, they are a law unto themselves. There have been numerous instances where not only have they indulged in excesses and harassed and humiliated people, occasionally they are guilty of wanton murder and worse. In almost all such cases the controlling authorities fail to control them. Occasionally they reprimand them. In a couple of cases even compensation has been paid but that has not put an end to the problem. State terrorism is as much a reality in Punjab as burning and killing was in November 1984 in Delhi and some other places.

The plain and ugly fact is that a political confrontation launched by the Akalis was given a communal colour by the Centre. Whether it was the Congress government in Punjab or it was the Governor's rule, the policies followed were the same. What is more, the policies followed by the media, both official and non-official, strengthened this feeling.

The fact of the matter is that they both colluded with each other and they still continue to do so. The form of it may have changed and now they may be at odds with each other. But basically there is no getting away from the fact that there was collusion between the two and it is this act of collusion which must be put an end to.

The extension of the Governor's rule for another six months is not a step in that direction. The collusion is still there. Only the form and the expression have changed. By the look of it the Centre wants to destroy terrorism. In actual practice terrorism will be destroyed only when the injustices done to the Sikhs are set right and not until then. That is the root of the trouble. So far, nothing is being done to tackle the problem as it should be tackled.

# President's Rule in Punjab: No Solution

Lt. Gen. J.S. Aurora

**P**resident's rule in Punjab in the last six months has brought nothing but misery a greater alienation of the Sikhs from the mainstream a greater schism between the two communities and given a greater fillip and I would like to stress this point—to the concept of Khalistan than ever before. With the collapse of the democratic processes and with the reign of terror and corruption let loose by the unpopular and incompetent Punjab Government, there is much greater aversion, bitterness and even disgust against the Central authority. Firm belief has taken root that the Centre is only interested in destroying the very fibre and clan of the Sikh community which was proud of its glorious role in the service of the country, both before and after independence.

In the last six months there has been a veritable reign of terror and a shooting match between the police forces on one side and militants of various shades and hues on the other. It has given an opportunity to the anti-social elements of both sides to play havoc with the innocent and well-meaning people of Punjab. While smugglers, dacoits, drug traffickers and gun runners have continued to loot and kill for self-aggrandizement, the corrupt elements in the police forces are busy in harassing the innocent to extract money and improve their chances of promotion by killing innocent persons in false and fake encounters.

**Ribeiro himself has publicly admitted that his police is corrupt as everywhere else and he had to sack 50 people for extracting money from poor parents to get the release of innocent young people. Further, some of the senior officers, while denying that they killed innocent people in false encounters, have admitted that they had killed such militants against whom they have proof that these people had killed more than five persons. Now who is the arbitrator to decide whether these people have killed five persons or not? The police themselves!**

Unless a person is found guilty, he is innocent. That aspect has been totally forgotten and the new black laws have made it possible for the corrupt police force to further play havoc with the innocent people. Myopic and blatantly autocratic attitude of the powers that be in the Centre has shown little or no sensitivity or imagination to take advantage of certain helpful and hopeful signs to start the process of political dialogue, to understand and solve the problem during the last six months. Deliberately or foolishly every effort has been made to discredit and destroy the moderate leadership thereby strengthening the hands and credibility of the

militants and divisive forces. All constructive efforts by Akal Takht Jathedar Prof. Darshan Singh have been blatantly sabotaged to justify the contrived excuse by this Government that there is no one to talk to.

**It is a point of great interest that while talking to Baba Amte, the DG of Police, Mr. Ribeiro, in Punjab in the last week of September stated that he was satisfied with the results, there were only 60 to 70 hard-core terrorists left, it would take him 9 to 10 months to liquidate them, after that it would be possible to contain the present movement but at no stage can it be eliminated.**

That means terrorism in Punjab. He and quite a few of his senior police officers who had met Baba Amte gave their assessment that their efforts could only make a ten per cent contribution towards solving this problem while ninety per cent is in the hands of the Government. They felt that the only possible positive political step is to assuage the hurt Sikh psyche and only that will improve the climate there when certain political measures can be taken.

### Healing Touch

**M**r. Ribeiro himself has said that he felt that releasing the Jodhpur etenus would be one step in the right direction. Now, Sir, I do not want to go into the figures of those killed during the last six months and these figures have been given by the various people. But, if Mr. Ribeiro in spite of this feels that he is achieving something, then we must give him credit for being a great optimist. But even if his confidence is well-founded, he at no stage claims that terrorism can be completely eradicated by police measures nor does he feel that his efforts are likely to contribute heavily towards finding a lasting solution.

How then is the Government expending all its energies and resources in killing and jailing such a large number of people many of whom may be innocent? I feel that if the aim is to create the peace of the dead, maybe the present method, as decided by the Government at the Centre can succeed, but only temporarily. If the aim is to create a climate of peace, amity and mutual confidence, you have failed miserably and you have caused tremendous damage to the Punjabi spirit. As distance in this vast country goes, there is not much

physical distance between Delhi and Amritsar. But emotional distance, however, puts Amritsar in a different planet. For the sake of ten per cent you may be winning the battle of the bullet. But you are well on your way of losing the battle of the mind which is essence of the problem. The victory in the battle of the bullet can only be transitory and may well become the cause for losing the war you cannot bind people by force, by chains and shackles. You can, however, bind them strongly and firmly with a superfluity of trust, mutual understanding and credibility.

### The Plans

**I**f the Central Government has any plans and is sincere in its intentions to solve the Punjab problem, it should spell out how it intends to use the next six months to restore and re-establish the democratic process, how it intends to re-establish its credibility amongst the people and win their confidence, how it intends to create a feeling of belonging as opposed to oppressive dominance, how it is going to meet the justifiable demands which, even though once accepted, remain totally unfulfilled, when it is going to start respecting human rights and human values and set free those people who have been incarcerated for so many years, how it is going to remove the false image created by its own media and, above all, how it is going to establish the rule of law.

**Let the people breath of real freedom. When is it going to punish the guilty of the heinous crimes in November 1984? If the Government has a plan, an honest plan, and honest intentions to implement the above-mentioned requirements, there may be some justification to extend the President's rule for the next six months. But from the past records of the last six months, of the previous period of President's rule in 1984-85, one can have little hope and faith in the present Government about either the intention or the ability or the competence to do any of the things suggested earlier.**

Under the circumstances, I do sincerely feel that a further extension will only cause greater misery to the people of Punjab and an irreparable damage to the democratic foundation and solidarity of the country.

(Based on the speech in Rajya Sabha on 10-11-87)

● At present mankind consumes 2600 cubic kilometres of fresh water per year. By the year 2000 this will rise to 6000 cubic kilometres, which is equal to the run-off of all the rivers in the world.

● The noisiest city in the world is said to be Cairo. The level of sound in that city is not much less than the roar of a jet airplane.



# Punish the Guilty

Continued from page 1

MPs and leaders of public opinion. The purpose of this peaceful and non-violent satyagraha is to draw attention of the right thinking public to the injustice being done to the Sikhs.

Apart from the two points mentioned above, the Government has also been guilty of not redressing the traumatic sufferings of the widows and other riot affected people. Those widows who were allotted tenements in Tilak vihar, are now being asked to pay Rs. 42,000 each. How and from where are they going to pay this amount, when they can hardly earn their livelihood.

A paltry pension of Rs. 400/- per month has only recently been promised which is totally inadequate. It should be at least of Rs. 1000/- PM.

No compensation has been given for business and household losses suffered by the people. Although the Misra Commission and the Dhillon Committee had made some tardy recommendations, nothing tangible has been done so far.

Persons who opened fire with

licensed arms in self defence during the November 84 disturbances are still being prosecuted while the real guilty are roaming about free.

Unless, the Prime Minister takes a bold political initiative to solve the Punjab tangle and provides succour to ameliorate the sufferings of the riot affected persons, the situation within country is bound to deteriorate and thus endanger the basic concept of country's unity and integrity. The beginning in this regard can be made by punishing the guilty and releasing the detenus immediately.

Our fight is against injustice and for human rights. Till the Government accepts these demands we shall continue our protest in some form or the other.

We would like to express our appreciation of the support of secular and non political organisations like the PUCL, PUDR, CFD the Punjab Action Committee and their associate organisations, which has given us impetus to launch this morcha.



Arrested volunteers at Police Station



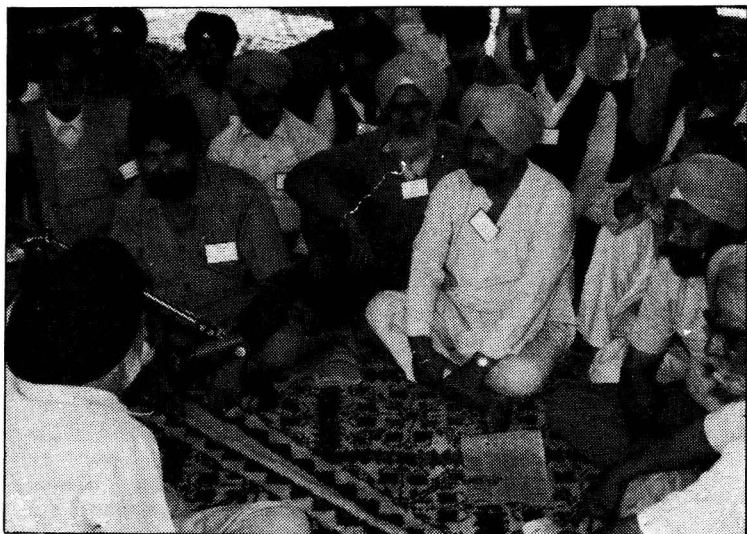
Another group of protestors

of their health. This policy is being followed by the jail authorities which is understood by common masses as the communal policy of the

Government against the Sikhs. The author of the letter has also raised a question why the Government is not applying the provisions of the Constitution,

while dealing with the Sikh community when they are part and parcel of the same land. This state of mind of the detenus has special significance to yourself and others in power while dealing with the Sikh problems and settling matters politically.

The Sikh in general and those belonging to this Confederation seek your intervention to ensure that the detenus are not tortured and they are provided with proper medical facilities and reading materials to meet their mental need and their parents are enabled to meet their children or relatives without any hindrance to provide solace to them and go back with good impression about the behaviour of the Government. One factor must be stated that one day these detenus are going to be set free from their illegal detention. Therefore, the Government should ensure that while they are under detention, they do not harbour ill will and hardened their attitudes towards the Government for obvious purpose of maintaining unity and healthy atmosphere in the country. It is a known fact now that the Detenus of Jodhpur Jail are innocent devotees who were unfortunate to meet the wrath of the soldiers when they raided Golden temple on 5th June 1984. As such the inhuman treatment to innocent devotees has been causing great resentment to all law abiding citizens of this country, in particular Sikh community.



Lt. Gen. J.S. Aurora (ret'd.) addressing the Satyagrahis at Boat Club.

## Eminent persons among 121 held for defying ban

A number of eminent civil rights' activists and other notables were among 121 persons arrested at the Rafi Marg-Rajpath crossing on 15 November for defying the current ban on assembly in the area.

They were demanding prosecution of the guilty in the November 1984 riots in Delhi, convening of a conference by the Prime Minister for resolving

the Punjab imbroglio, release of the Jodhpur detenus and remission of jail terms given to those who deserted the army in the wake of 'Operation Bluestar.'

Those arrested had gathered under the banner of the Rashtiya Sampooran Kranti Manch at the Amr Jawan Jyoti in India Gate and marched down Rajpath till the Rafi Marg

crossing.

They included, among others, the head of the Sikh Forum, Mr Jagjit Singh Aurora, the head of the People's Union for Civil Liberties, Mr Rajinder Sachar, the head of the Citizens For Democracy, Mr V.M. Tarkunde, the eminent journalist, Mr. Kuldip Nayar, Dr Sushila Nayyar, and Mr Surendra Mohan.

## Memo randum to Prime Minister

In another meeting to seek Justice the South Delhi Singh Sakhas Confederation took note of a letter sent to the press from Jodhpur Jail by Bhai Manjit Singh. The meeting decided to send a memorandum to the Prime Minister asking for his intervention in the matter.

Lt. Col. Manohar Singh (Retd.) convener of the confederation pointed out in the memorandum the letter of Bhai Manjit Singh (President of All India Sikh Students Federation, a detenus in Jodhpur Jail) dated 24th September 1987, which has appeared in Ajit (Punjabi) of 16th October 1987, since it contains a list of horrible tales of torture and general illtreatment to the Sikh detenus held in and its unity

and maintenance of trust between the Government and a common citizen of India, the subject matter of the letter is considered by the confederation and urgent one, which needs your special immediate attention to ameliorate the feelings of the Sikh community, and to obtain relief for the detenus from the torture and illtreatment, which they are facing over a long period of three years. This is constantly affecting their health and mental equilibrium, which has very important bearing on their future of working capacity to earn and maintain themselves and their families.

The total sense of the letter is that they are being denied the normal facilities of life provided in the Constitution and security





# Students confront black marketing and communalism

**Bharat Dogra**

**O**n October 10 in Rohtak there was a relatively minor quarrel between the staff of Sangeet cinema and the students of medical college. The students were opposing the open blackmarketing of cinema tickets and the arrogance of the staff in handling a complaint of this. This dispute was almost tapering off when suddenly about a dozen policemen reached the site of quarrel and fell upon the students with lathis. They did not even touch the other side, rather the staffers (or their men) were allowed to beat some students while the policemen held them.

There were three Sikhs among the medical students. According to the students (both Sikh and non-Sikh, present at the site) the policemen, without even a shred of evidence regarding any links of these students with terrorists and in fact without knowing anything about these students, immediately referred to them as 'terrorists' and 'ugravadis'. According to at least one eye-witness, some of the other men (other than the policemen) beating the students also used similar language. Further, according to eye-witnesses, while the police was merciless in beating all the students, they were somewhat extra-cruel in beating the Sikh students.

According to Verrendra Singh, an eye-witness, thank-



Tension among Students at Rohtak

fully these being night hours a big crowd had not gathered. Otherwise immediately on hearing the cry of terrorists, one or more of these entirely innocent youths could have been lynched, before their colleagues even had a chance to intervene on their behalf.

Later as the students were taken to the police station, soon other getting down from the van one of the Sikh students was insultingly told, "This is

Haryana, not Punjab".

Next day the students of Rohtak medical college met to oppose this arbitrary and cruel beating up of students. It was decided to highlight not only the widespread blackmarketing of cinema tickets and the police atrocity but also the insult of the Sikh students and the dangerous identification of all Sikhs as terrorists. All of these demands drew the widespread support of the entire student

community, not just the medical students, of Rohtak. Delegations from several colleges met the officials and several protest marches were taken out.

In the end important demands of the students regarding action against the guilty policemen and cinema employees as well as steps to curb blackmarketing were accepted. But the real significance of this students'

movement in Rohtak goes beyond that.

At a time when the student community is being exposed to several influences which seek to spread communal feelings among them also, this was a golden example of how the students resisted and overcame such influences to take a clear and firm stand that they will not tolerate any insults and attacks on their colleagues belonging to the minority community. Here is an example which can be fruitfully followed at other places to challenge and fight the communal influences and reflections instead of ignoring or sidestepping them.

Ironically at one stage even the students fighting on this noble issue were accused of communalising the issue. The question is when officials behave in a blatantly communal way should we bury or ignore this matter on the plea that when more people hear of this the communal atmosphere will worsen or should the officials be exposed for their real feelings and actions and a movement should be launched against such official actions? The first course of action will not solve any problems, whereas the second course of action will deter and discourage those who try to use their official positions to give free play to their own narrow minded prejudices and feelings.

## Punjab Economy

**K.S. Khosla**

One of the paradoxes of the Punjab situation is that despite terrorism, the State's economy is making progress each year, particularly in the field of agriculture. Another indicator of development is the increased consumption of electricity.

In fact, in the field of agriculture, Punjab has achieved the production targets fixed for various crops for 1989-90 during 1985-86 itself. The total grain production in 1985-86 was 17.2 million tonnes against the Seventh Plan target of 17.1 million tonnes. The production in 1984-85 was 16.13 million tonnes. The production of rice was 5.05 million tonnes against 4.85 million tonnes in the previous year and the Plan target of 5.4 million tonnes.

The production of wheat was 10.99 million tonnes against the Plan target of 10.5 million tonnes and 9.7 million tonnes in 1984-85. The production of cotton was 1.4 million bales against 1.2 million bales in the previous year. The State contributed 64.74 per cent to the Central pool of grain against 61.48 per cent in 1984-85.

The hardy Punjab farmer was not satisfied with this achievement. He kept up the upward production in 1986-87, second year of the Seventh

Plan. As against the total outlay of Rs. 575 crores, the expenditure incurred was about 677 crores, a performance of 110.97 per cent. Most of the physical targets for the year have been achieved. The foodgrain production increased to 17.88 million tonnes. The production of wheat increased to 11 million tonnes and that of rice to 6.02 million tonnes. The production of cotton went up to 1.69 million bales against the target of 1.3 million bales. The production of pulses is expected to be .22 million tonnes against the target of .18 million tonnes. The oil seeds production is likely to be .24 million tonnes, .5 million tonnes more than the target. An area of 569.4 million hectares was brought under horticulture against the target of 280 million hectares.

An irrigation potential of 51,000 hectares has been created in 1986-87, 3,000 hectares more than the target.

The State is going ahead with diversification of agriculture with a view to augmenting the income of farmers. For the first time, new crops of sunflower, soyabean and toria, mixed with ghobi and sarson, have been introduced. Intensity of cropping has been raised from 167 per cent to 170 per cent.

### Setback for Industry

Industrial production has no doubt received setback due to the socio-political situation. Despite these handicaps, the expenditure outlay performance in 1986-87 in power and industries sector has been satisfactory: it was 121.61 and 118.71 per cent respectively.

In all 6225 small scale industries and 5917 village industries were registered during the year. The State received 40 letters of intent and 20 licences. Fourteen large and medium units with an investment of Rs. 125.40 crores went into production generating employment for 3888 persons. The number of small units added during the year was 8557 estimated to provide employment to 23,000 persons.

The small scale industrial units have shown a sustained growth. Their number increased from 1,00,899 with a fixed investment of Rs. 676.77 crores and employing about 5,36,000 persons in 1984-85 to 1,10,268 with a fixed investment of Rs. 744 crores and employing 5,90,000 persons in 1985-86.

But the overall growth of the industrial sector has not been up to the mark. In spite of an ambitious annual targeted growth rate of 10 per cent for the mining and manufacturing sectors in the Seventh Plan, the industrial sector (registered and unregistered) recorded a

growth rate of 1.3 per cent in 1985-86. Apart from the disadvantage of location and long distances from the sources of raw materials and markets, law and order problem has been responsible for the subdued trend in industrial growth. The general index of industrial production rose by 3.94 per cent in 1983-84 and by 2.29 per cent in 1984-85. The electricity component of the General Index has shown a markedly low trend in 1984-85 having a growth rate of 3.10 per cent against 13.29 per cent in the previous year. However, in case of manufacturing, growth rate in 1984-85 was 2.02 per cent compared to 1.66 per cent in the previous year.

### Electricity

The generation of electricity during 1986-87 in the State is 10,365 million kwh showing an increase of 10 per cent over 1985-86. Purchase of electricity from other States was at 915 million kwh against 394 million kwh in 1985-86. Thus the total availability of power increased from 9,799 million kwh in 1985-86 to 11,279 million kwh in 1986-87, showing an increase of 15.1 per cent.

This is good news but there has to be much better results the industrial sector if the State is to make continued balanced progress. Agriculture continues to dominate the State economy. The share of this sector in the gross state domestic product

(GSDP) was a little above 50 per cent in 1985-86 and 1986-87. For proper and balanced growth of economy there ought to be a gradual decline in the share of agriculture and allied sectors and a progressive rise in that of manufacturing and other secondary sectors in State income generation. Industrialisation of the State has not picked up the desired level partly for want of large industrial units in the public sector. In the absence of such units, the process of setting up of ancillary units has not made much headway. The share of manufacturing sector in GSDP during 1984-85 and 1985-86 was 11.0 per cent and 10.5 per cent respectively. In contrast, at all India level, the share of the agriculture sector has progressively declined from 37.5 per cent in 1983-84 to 34.5 per cent in 1985-86 whereas the share of manufacturing sector in the total gross domestic product has increased from 15.3 per cent to 15.8 per cent during the same period. This shows the unbalanced growth of Punjab's economy and underlines the need for developing the manufacturing sector. Tertiary group of sectors witnessed a slight fall in 1985-86. The fall was noticed in trade, hotels, restaurants sector as also in 'Other Services' sector whereas the share of public administration banking and insurance showed considerable increase in 1985-86 over 1984-85.



# Propaganda: At the cost of public

B. Bhaskar

**W**ho occupies the chair, whatever party he belongs to, the man behaves the same. Enjoying power that is what he likes, This man accuses other of being undemocratic, selfish parochial, nepotism and so on. But when it comes to himself, the behaviour will be the same. Mr. N.T. Rama Rao, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister is no exception. He lambastes Mr. Rajiv Gandhi using T.V. and Radio for his personal propaganda. When it comes to his turn NTR does the same.

This star turned politician likes propaganda. What ever he does is publicity mongering show. He enjoys power. As Russell says about the people in power, N.T. Rama Rao likes publicity, what ever he do, in such a style that catches media attention. The electronic media out of his reach Andhra Chief Minister thought a new venture. And thus 'Telugu Samacharam' (Samacharam means News) Government owned for nightily was born.

The first issue was published on March, 30, 1987. Each issue costs ten paise then, and later price revised to 25 paise. A minimum of 12 pages, it contains Mr. V. Saidulu, Commissioner, Information and public Relations Department is the brain child behind Samacharam. He himself as editor, writes regularly signed editorials, unseen in any other news paper. Telugu Samacharam's initial circulation was 20,000 copies. By June it shot up to 1, 85,000 and by August it was 6 lakhs. The October issue claims 10,27,500 copies of circulation. Each issue contained dozens of NTR's Colour photos, speeches and governments programmes. It is all NTR, NTR, NTR. All the banner items contained NTR. So far, The Second Issue blowed up 70 Colour photos of the Chief Minister. This itself speaks the nature of the Magazine. There is no news about opposition partly and even ministerial colleagues appear a little.

## At Public Cost

**T**his fortnightly has no budgetary allocation. Massive amount of Rs. 50 lakhs bumped per month on it. As there is no news print allocation, samacharam is printed in paper Purchased

been bringing our 'Andhra Pradesh' in four languages.

This was later converted into 'Telugu Velugu' monthly. In December Telugu Velugu's publication stopped. Then came Samacharam.



N. T. Rama Rao

from Rayalaseema paper Mills. As only some Government departments and public limited companies advertise in it, this magazine incurs a loss of Rs. 4.75 paise per each copy, as per the statement made by information minister himself. It was said half of the copies distributed as complemantaries by Information and Public Relations Department. IPRD is playing so far the role of agency distribution work. This burden to the Department affected publication of books, leaflets and others. Which it was doing in past. Even publication of Chief Minister's speeches stopped.

Telugu Samacharam follows no Journalistic norms. NTR's idea of launching Naa Desam (My Country), Telugu Desam parties own news paper was topped. As Samacharam doing the job new, Earlier IPRD had

## Words and Deeds

**O**ur leaders often quotes Gandhiji. But what they do while performing their duties always was un Gandhian. Words and deeds will not melt anywhere. That is acting contrary to what they say. Here NTR is no exception.

He criticize others using official media for personal propaganda and when it comes to himself, do the same "If all daily News Papers agree to devote two pages for the Governments version of developmental stories, I will stop the publication of Telugu Samacharam", says NTR. Here what is developmental news, needs no affairs we see in our country today.

his home town Zirakpur, 210 kilometres away.

Since then the extremists have kept up the heat and have now finally ex-communicated not only the Barnala supported ex-President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Kabul Singh, but also top leaders of the Unified Akali Dal (UAD), Parkash Singh Badal and Gurcharan Singh Tohra despite their being in jail and hence incommunicative.

## Rivals clash

Only a few days earlier, on October 16 to be exact, when the UAD clashed with the Akali Dal (Longowal) in the contest for the control of the SGPC, a section of the extremists had obliquely expressed their preference for Tohra by highlighting the fact that Barnala was no longer part of the Panth and his nominee would not be acceptable. Though the UAD had been close to Prof. Darshan Singh and the SGPC under its control had held that the "Panthic Committee" could not impose its nominees as head priests, and thus a confrontation between the SGPC and the "Panthic Committee" was being built up, nobody imagined that the group of extremists constituting this "committee" would act so swiftly and so recklessly. They dismissed the three head priests nominated by the Tohra faction and put three non-entities in their place.

Where does all this lead to? The impression that this "committee" was a handmaiden of forces acting from abroad has been reinforced. With its legitimacy getting eroded rapidly, it has grown more desperate than before. If it were a free agent it would have, in the first instance, seized upon the "glow of freedom within India" resolution to make it a stepping stone for its long-term aims.

Even now, when two groups of the Akalis had held two separate elections and both staked their claims for legitimacy, the "committee" could have shown its preference for Tohra who had helped the extremists in many situations. After all it was he who was responsible for installing their guiding spirit—the late Bhindranwale—in Guru Nanak Niwas in the first instance and then in the Akal Takht itself. It was he who had allowed fortifications inside the Golden Temple precincts before Operation Blue Star and who had upheld the extremist demand of abolition of a beautifully reconstructed Akal Takht which had been accepted after due Sikh ceremonies by the then head priests. It was he again whose first act after re-election last year was the abolition of the Task Force which Barnala's protege, Kabul Singh, had constituted to keep the extremists at bay.

Then why have the extremists of the so-called "Panthic Committee", all proclaimed offenders with many murders on their head, acted the way they have?

It is because they are people in a hurry. They are hardpressed and for the past two months the squeeze of Ribeiro and his forces is

increasingly felt by them. Their foreign connection is in the open as never before (they appointed Gurmeet Singh Aulakh, an American Sikh, as the President of their Khalistan Council) and the number of their opponents within the so-called Khalistan camp has grown rapidly.

## Social base

Their social base in the Punjab has rapidly narrowed down with the real face of some of the top terrorists—including Jinda and Bawa—being unmasked as those of ordinary criminals quarrelling about distribution of booty and running after women of disrepute.

Their front organisation—All India Sikh Students Federation—stands not only divided but fragmented. And their protegee, the Gurjit faction, has held Manjit Singh, the brother of late Amrik Singh, original president of the AISSF and son of Bhindranwale's predecessor Sant Kartar Singh, head of Damdami Taksal, to be a 'government agent'.

All these adds up to this: The extremists are badly divided and fragmented; they are feeling the squeeze of the forces of law and order as never before; they have pitted themselves against leaders of both major factions of the Akali Dal and distanced themselves from all established Akali stalwarts; their actions have thrown Tohra, Badal and Barnala in the same court, objectively, after a long time; and their confrontation with the SGPC (both factions) the product of the great Akali struggle and the only lawful institution to run the affairs of the Sikh temples, is complete.

In this situation what should the Centre do? It should, above narrow partisan considerations and unilaterally act—without any bargaining or package deal—to correct some of the wrongs and to take the sting out of the hurt of the so-called Sikh psyche.

It should no longer delay release of those of the Jodhpur detenus who do not face any serious charges (and they constitute a good majority). It should review the cases of the remaining 143 Sikh army men and release a good chunk which is not charged with serious crime. It should initiate action against criminals involved in November 1984 riots.

As for the rest, it should give up playing one faction of the Akalis against another and let Akali leaders come together so that they can act against the extremists who have any way declared them outcasts.

It should initiate a dialogue with all national political parties to find a solution of outstanding problems of Punjab, through a broad consensus. The Rajiv-Longowal accord is no longer a sacrosanct document—especially after the political change in Haryana—but it can form the basis for a new accord.

The situation that has arisen is unique and in a way auspicious. A wedge has been drawn between those who believe that their destiny lies within India and those who are out to divide and disrupt our country.

Courtesy Hindustan Times

# Time for decisive action

Jagjit Singh Anand

**F**rom August 4, 1987 when the Acting Jathedar of the Akal Takht, Prof. Darshan Singh, called a gathering of all Sikh organisations to view the situation confronting the "Sikh Panth", to October 22, when the so-called Panthic Committee held a "Sarbat Khalsa" whose venue is unknown and authenticity is in question from every angle, developments in Akali politics of different hues have been revealing.

Prof. Darshan Singh had actually called the August 4 convention to get endorsement of a wide spectrum of Sikh opinion to a formula which

could be the basis of negotiations between himself and the Central Government. He had carefully prepared the list of invitees and had restricted representation to two people from each organisation, with only one of them vested with the right to speak. But despite all precautions, things went awry when a long document was read out on behalf of the Panthic Committee aimed at pushing matters to the extreme. At this the Akal Takht Chief got a resolution endorsed by the congregation which talked of "an area in the North-West of the country where

Sikhs could enjoy the glow of freedom."

This was nothing but "Khalsa Raj" ("Khalista" within India) and the professor thought he could carry all with him on its basis. But he underestimated the extremists who wanted nothing less than "full-fledged Khalistan here and now", and who pitted the Akal Takht against the Indian Constitution and proclaimed that all those who had anything to do with this Constitution were out of the Sikh pale and would be eliminated outright. It was this that made Prof. Darshan Singh flee from his seat of authority to



# Unity Not a Mechanical Slogan

—I. K. Gujral

**W**ith each passing year, the problem of communalism is assuming a horrifying shape. Unfortunately, since independence we have not realised the gravity of the problem resulting in a fire brigade approach. Whenever there is a riot or communal violence, the Government orders an enquiry, the findings come when everybody has forgotten since another riot has overtaken in the meantime. With every riot the quality of violence escalates. In early 40s, before freedom, whenever these unfortunate incidents occurred the rioters used brick bats or soda water bottles. Gradually it came to knives and swords and now pistols, guns and bombs have taken over. Previously the durations of such riots were short—a few hours or a day or so. Now these faster on for months as in Gujarat.

Unfortunately, the virus of communalism has affected the people in uniform too. We hear complaint against the Sikh policemen in the Punjab and about the Hindu members of the PAC in U.P. It is tragic indeed that a policeman or member of a para-military force who is custodian of the law and order should become partisan. A Hindu in uniform may sometimes think that it is his duty to hit a Sikh or a Muslim

some people commercialise it or convert it into a constituency to seek votes in its name. The communalism also becomes fundamentalism when its followers believe that a particular religion or belief is superior to others and has an exclusive relationship with the God.

The Hindu, the Muslim or the Sikh fundamentalists believe that they have exclusive and unique relationship with the God. The rival fundamentalists. There clash and co-existence becomes difficult. That makes the fundamentalism more dangerous. A claim that "we are the only people and everyone else is inferior than us who must either follow or be destroyed politically or socially," results in clash and violence.

## Secularism

**W**hat is secularism? Secularism is not pandering the two rival fundamentalisms or communalisms at the same time. Gandhi ji was the best example of being a secularist who was deeply religious at the same time. Nobody ever saw Gandhiji going to places of worship or touching the feet of Godmen. He went to temples only to ensure entry by Harjans. Since we have not adopted the Gandhian outlook or secularism of this hue, we are faced with

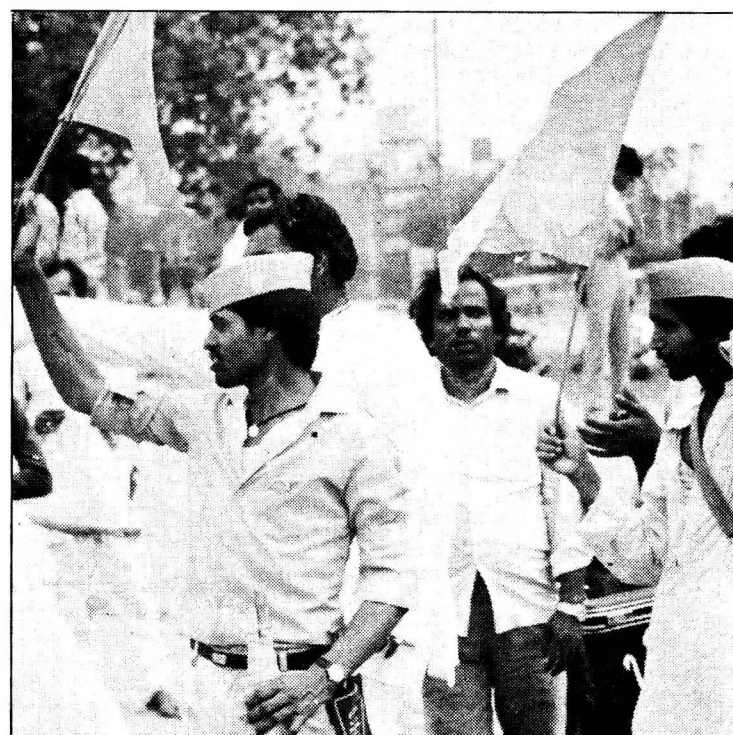
Prasad wanted to go to a Kumbh mela. Nehru objected to it saying, "you cannot go there as a Head of State but as a private individual you may." Secularism is not a negative ideology; it seeks to transform the society from the dark ages of obscurantist beliefs to one with modern scientific outlook. Modernization inculcates a scientific temper. It helps in inducing rational thinking. A stage must be reached soon when the people judge and identify not by religious affiliations but by ones conduct. One may or may not be in power. He should be looked upon by the society as a norm setter who could be depended on at critical moments.

**One of the sad mistakes made is that the unity is confused with the uniformity. Efforts to erase the minority culture and languages in the name of unity causes friction ultimately end in riots. One language and one culture is not our objective. All our languages have a rich heritage. We adopted Hindi to replace English and not other languages. Therefore, all those who speak Hindi must manifest more accommodative, flexible, reasonable and responsive attitude of they wish that another person should learn their language then it has to be done with love and understanding. The basic concept must be kept in mind: we are seeking a unity of diversity and not uniformity.**

**Day to day social contacts are now defined by status. When I was young boy the circle of my friends was composite. Among friends one never felt differences. But today the friendship circles have become exclusive. It may be that because the uneven economic growth has caused compartmentalisation. The children of one class mix up with their social equals. They don't know the others who may be from the different castes and faiths.**

**one class mix up with their social equals. They don't know the others who may be from the different castes and faiths.**

In the name of minority culture we have permitted the educational institutions to be managed by various communal and Caste groups, while the state funding meets the expenses. There is no valid reason to justify existence of any denomination institution or any school or a college by either a majority or a minority Community. The very name of



How to deal with this

and A Sikh in uniform may believe that by overlooking the terrorist activity is supporting the cause of his religion. How can we sustain a State where in the main organs cause to be reliable or credible. Gradually, a part of the society loses its confidence in instrument of the State. If Hindus in Punjab feel that they are endangered by some in the Punjab police and the Muslims in up feel the same about the PAC and minorities in Kashmir feel the same way, how do you run a Government?

**Communalism has taken the shape of fundamentalism. What is communalism? In our system, the society, and the State are not against the religion. On the contrary we are a religiously oriented people. But a religion becomes communalism when**

such problems.

A secular state has no biases—it treats every religion and ideology at Par. And thus the state ensures neutrality of its instruments. You can't have a communally oriented minister and a secular state at the same time. It is just not possible. If my conduct creates an impression that my proclivity and tilt is towards one religious group the others are bound to breed anxiety and insecurity. A minister has a right to do puja or goto a mosque or a gurdwara as he wills but he must do so in private. If his visits are televised then it imparts a signal. That he is neither secular nor fair in his dispensations. The famous controversy of Nehru and Rajendra Prasad must be remembered. Dr. Rajendra

## Complex Problem

**T**he problem is complex. How to deal with it? Perhaps we have to take two or three steps straightaway. The National Integration Council decided years ago, and in Bengal in Siddhartha Shankar Ray's time it was done, to organise anti-riot squads drawing their man power from all communities and castes. This would help in two ways:—inter-balancing at critical moments and belonging to the same regiment and living together erases prejudices. When they share a barrack then they see the human face of the different caste and the other religions. This has happened in the army. **Day to day social contacts are now defined by status. When I was young boy the circle of my**

**'riends was composite. Among friends one never felt differences. But today the friendship circles have become exclusive. It may be that because the uneven economic growth has caused compartmentalisation. The children of**

these schools creates a different kind of ethos, even when students from other communities are admitted. The consciousness of being an Indian first does not come from the very and unless we do this nothing can change.

Continued on page 12

**Indiscretion on the part of a few people and regretfully, even police officials, whose minds have been poisoned by communal thinking can turn a small quarrel into a big tragedy. But at the same time, if ordinary people are determined to oppose such mischief, then this tragedy can also be avoided while the people's faith in communal harmony is reaffirmed, as this report on a student's movement from Rohtak clearly reveals.**



Last month the Daily "Telegraph" from Calcutta invited letters from its readers on Terrorism and its tackling by the State. A majority of readers felt that it is wrong for a democratic state to indulge in counter-terror. At the same time, they recognised the need to eliminate terrorism and held that education, socio-economic uplift and acceptance of the just demands of the people go a long way in tackling extremism. We reproduce here a selection of views for the benefit of our readers.

**W**hen the limits of protest are exceeded, when sincere appeals to sense and reason go unheeded and terrorism continues unabated, the state, even a democratic state, should not hesitate to indulge in counter-terror—as an effective means to counter terror.

Take the case of our own country. A spectre of instability, chaos, violence and moral degeneracy is haunting India; the menace of terrorism has been eating into its soul like slow poison. There is no safety or security of life nor law and order in society. In recent days, the tempo of terrorist acts has risen above one an hour and television news broadcasts

democratic state—have to be taken; when use of the most effective means curb the evil of terrorism against the state and its citizens becomes a factor of paramount importance.

Given the tragic circumstances, state inaction would be deplorable and "terrify the terrorists" becomes the adage of the hour even if it would mean that a democratic state indulges in counter-terror. Otherwise, men would continue to live eternally in the present, in the fleeting moments of frustration and desire, ashamed of the past, afraid of the future. *P. Venkataramana (23), Lawyer, 419, R R L Campus, Bhubaneswar, Orissa-751 013*

Should a government resort to wanton killing as Mr. S.S. Ray did to curb the Naxalites? The government loses face, the police loses the people's confidence; a democratic government cannot afford to do that.

**Terrorism stems from unredressed grievances of the people, which may be illogical or unethical. If the wrongs and injustices are righted in time there would be less cause for discontent and disillusionment which feed the forces of terrorism. Justice delayed is justice denied. Counter-terror is not the answer. A democratic government can weed out terrorism through some of the following measures:**

measures are not found to be in effective to contain terrorism, no oppressive force should be applied. In that event, violence will only multiply.

In fact, short of giving the police unrestricted powers without being accountable to anyone and converting the state into an armed garrison, there does not seem to be much alternative to accepting the bloody handiwork of fanatical fundamentalists as a way of life.

Now the pertinent question is: how to control terrorism without resorting to violence? In my opinion, to win lasting peace in Punjab it is imperative to tackle the situation politically instead of battling the same with bullets and bayonets.

**Justice now demands that those languishing in Jodhpur jail should be tried immediately provided there are specific charges against them. Prompt action is also to be taken to provide financial aid to the unemployed to set up smallscale industries which will serve the dual purpose of revamping the economy and keep the Sikh youth constructively occupied.**

**Terrorism stems from grievances of the people, which are illogical or unethical. If the injustices are righted in time there would be less cause for discontent and disillusionment which feed the forces of terrorism. Justice delayed is justice denied. Counter-terror is not the answer. A democratic government can weed out terrorism through the following measures:**

and ethnic warfare. And the democratic state reacts violently in response. But the reaction is most concerted, organised and punitive when the people direct their wrath at the state itself. It is here that counter-terror is unleashed in the most fascist manner.

This is 'necessary' for the democratic state because questioning, protesting and challenging the social structure means upsetting the social order, disturbing the status quo. And the democratic state not being of the people cannot tolerate this. Its answer, there

fore, is a true democracy of the people's union, symbolised by the form of a terrorist, national state's

# Should a Democratic State

seem to have little to show except the misery and gloomy aftermath of one gruesome bloodbath after another— orphaned children wailing, the plight of sobbing young widows and the sad sight of dutiful police personnel being laid to rest. The life that one had come to expect from an orderly and civilised democracy has become a thing of bygone years. Terrorism has become the normal way of life. An altogether depressing and ominous scenario.

There are no discussions over problems, only violent agitations; there are no universal causes that people believe in, only growing conflicts and a spurt of suspect ideologies which mingle religion and statecraft in a dubious bid to influence the lives of laymen and leaders alike. There is no peace and goodwill, only a respite between a day of terror and the night when nightmares become real.

What indeed are the limits of protest in a democratic state? To what length can one go in order to assert one's views, state differences in opinion or make one's demands without endangering the freedom of other people "You can swing your arms as much as you like provided you do not hit your neighbour's nose" is perhaps the most apt definition. But lamentably, terrorists and the wayward few intend not so much to exercise their body as to make the common people helpless victims of intimidating tactics.

Doubtless, ours is a democratic state besieged by terrorism and the killings go on relentlessly. When things come to such a pass, restraint becomes an act of misplaced sympathy, patience no longer a virtue and state-sensitivity a failing. This is the juncture when difficult times beset a growing democracy and hard decision—hard for a

## Global accord on anti-terrorism

**I**n less than a decade the menace of terrorism has assumed disconcerting proportions all over the world. The aim of terrorism—domestic or international—is to wreak vengeance against those whom the terrorists regard as a hindrance to their goals—which are usually illegal, unethical and disruptionist. It is not confined to individuals and groups; even some states are involved, overtly or covertly.

If the targets of the terrorist are the government and its institutions, the situation is not so bad; but when the reckless killing extends to innocent men, women and children, it has to be countered with a heavy hand. Rationalising this as aberration is to cheat oneself. After all it is the primary duty of a democratic government to protect the lives and property of its citizens.

Counter-terror then appears to be the immediate solution. However, a democracy has its limitations in the battle against terrorism. It relies on discussion and persuasion while violence is the essence of terrorism. So the dilemma for the democratic state is to either give in or resist. If it gives in the road is opened for further terrorist acts. If it resists, it risks ending up with frightening consequences. The irony is that it is a free society which enables lawless elements to indulge in subversion. The government's counter-measure comes usually after the deed is done.

India launched Operation Bluestar to wipe out terrorists in Punjab but some "foreign hands" keep them supplied with arms.

The US extends help to Nicaraguan and Salvadoran extremists. While a country writhes under the burden of terrorism, other nations incite subversion. Under these circumstances counter-terror is self-defeating.

Political grievances must be looked into with an open mind. Special anti-terrorist police forces should be set up.

Existing intelligence systems should be upgraded.

Better international understanding, specially with neighbours, should be fostered. Communication systems should be improved.

Governments should go all out to promote a unanimous international accord on anti-terrorism, debarring nations from helping foreign terrorists in any manner whatsoever. *Mr. Shahid Atahar Khan (24), Engineer, Bhel site office, K.T.P.P. Phase I, PO Mecheda, Midnapore, West Bengal-721 137.*

## Terror can only breed terror

A democratic state should not indulge in counter-terror because "Hitlerism will never be defeated by counter-Hitlerism. It can only breed superior Hitlerism of the nth degree." Democracy as we know, can only be saved through non-violence because a democratic state, so long as it is sustained by violence, cannot provide for or protect the weak. The former President, Mr. Zail Singh, has aptly remarked that a "bloodstain cannot be wiped out by blood." This is also evident in the history of India's freedom struggle. During the freedom movement, we have seen that the killings in retaliation by the British police, had only made terrorists more determined.

So is the case now in Punjab where terrorist activity has already taken a huge toll to human lives in retaliation of the counter-terror unleashed by the state in total disregard of democratic norms required to be observed in resolving such a delicate issue.

In a democratic setup so long as the existing laws of the land and all other democratic

A citizen's peace force should also be set up in every village, town and city and adequately equipped with modern weapons. Only such a force will be able to provide round-the-clock vigilance with the support of the ordinary people. These steps though not exhaustive will, however, help control terrorism without offending democratic norms.

*Arindrajit Roy (36), Legal Practitioner, Alipore Criminal Court, District Bar Association, Calcutta-700 027*

## Democracy is a utopian concept

**W**hen such a question is posed to citizens who believe in democracy, the answer is obviously in the negative. Yet it is interesting to note that it is in the "democracies" of today that such questions arise, are posed and the need for discussion felt. What does it indicate? That democracy is a utopian concept which is eluding us from one election to the next.

The question then arises, what is democracy? In a country where poverty, ignorance, lack of education, hunger and disparity is the order, the equation of the ballot with democracy is an eyewash. This is dangerous. It arises from the fact that while those who control the politics of society and compel the people at large to vote, the latter live with the illusion that they have correctly reposed their future in the hand of "their" men, when in reality none represents "them." Whose interests do the elected represent? The interest of the electorate or the interest of the ruling elite?

Seen in this context it is quite clear that problems of the people are neither expressed nor solved—only felt. The suffering increases and social tension burst forth. This is manifest, for lack of a direction, in communal tensions, regional intolerances, linguistic frictions





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ir-terror. Once perceived, it to understand behind the ste's counter-

obvious that a state which is will view the with compas- and concern ecting with But this is not allen in the tis blinded as nist and anti therefore, the ter-terror is

explained as necessary to maintain the sovereignty and integrity of the nation.

Not condemning a democratic state's counter-terror is tantamount to misunderstanding history. We must pause to reflect that yesterday's terrorists or extremists are today's heroes. Spartacus fighting a slave society, Shaheed Bhagat Singh and Shaheed Sukhdev along with countless others fighting the colonial British, although condemned in their respective eras by the ruling regime and the state, are our acknowledged heroes of today. It is, therefore, only expedient historically to strongly oppose the reactionary democratic state's counter-terror.

Kaveri Dutt (29), Researcher, X-3, Vidyasagar Niketan, Salt Lake, Sector I, Calcutta-700 064

### Force is only solution

The Naxalite movement was ruthlessly crushed by the government. Was this democratic? Did the government compromise with the

Naxalites? No, the young men of Bengal were massacred without being given even an opportunity to assert themselves.

Why then is the same coercion not being advocated in the case of the present Khalistan and Gorkhaland movements? While the government is keen on signing accords with the insurgents, why is it inert about the security of innocent people? Do not the innocents have the right to live in a democracy?

Demands like regional autonomy, identity crisis or inclusion of a language in the Constitution are solely constitutional problems. In a democracy, these constitutional problems should be resolved by peaceful negotiations. Logical demands of the terrorists can be catered to but what about such illogical demands like forming a new state (Gorkhaland) or forming a new country (Khalistan)? What solution is there other than counter-terror if such illogical demands continue, accompanied by terrorist violence?

violent upheaval. The cycle of storm and lull provides an escalating spiral of violence, where terrorist action and consequent military reactions fans the flames of repression. An Army counter-terror doctrine must, therefore understand that commitment and intimidation lies at the core of the terrorist's strategy.

A refusal to be part of the campaign of terror must be the cornerstone of Army response. Army personnel involved in counter-terror operations seem to be always trapped in a Catch-22 situation. Any soft approach necessarily leads to an increase in insurgency; yet over-reaction by Army troops seems even more counter productive, especially if private property and innocents are involved.

Unfortunately, the Indian Army seems time and again entrapped in this snare. Any incident of terrorism, whether a raid, gruesome killing or kidnapping, immediately generates public clamour for punitive action. In an attempt to appease public outrage, Army columns are mobilised into

hiding in the precincts. Again this proved to be a false alarm. Ironically, the same Gurjit Singh surfaced in a telephonic interview condemned the act as state terrorism.

These types of incidents only add to the feeling that the local Sikh population is being harassed and victimised. It will not only lead to retaliation but also create thousands of sympathisers for the extremists. It would also cause greater communal tension and loss of innocent lives. Counter-terror is symptomatic treatment of the disease of terrorism and cannot root out the virus.

A democracy, by its very definition, poses its own restrictions on the battle against domestic terrorism. The challenge is to find effective means of curbing this tendency without an unacceptable curtailment of civil liberties. For an effective solution to the problem we must strengthen and analyse the socioeconomic and cultural environment for correct understanding of the underlying motives of terrorists. Only such a rational

action, the day will not be very far off when terrorism will override the government, jeopardising the democratic state. The task of isolating the terrorists will also become next to impossible.

In conclusion, it would, perhaps, not be out of place to mention how West Bengal resorted to counter-terror to curb the Naxalite movement which yielded results. Had not the state government at the time been strict enough the state would not have been free from terrorist activity even now. The terrorists who are holding the country to ransom have to bear in mind that nothing enduring can be built upon violence.

Subodh Kumar Jha (57), Service, 62/50 Diamond Harbour Road, Calcutta-700038

### All Sikhs are not terrorists

Terror! Terrorism! Terrorists! are themselves terrorstricken words, which at once bring Punjab to mind. Necessity now demands united action to

# Indulge in Counter-Terror?



The policy of the government of signing accords is not at all a solution. This further breeds problems as new groups of insurgents will emerge with their new demands and it will not be astonishing to find every corner of India resorting to violence soon. And then nobody but the government will be blamed for its imprudent policies.

The Gandhian policy of non-violence is not the need of the times. It is not the time for the government to turn the other cheek. Democracy does not mean silently bowing in front of a few fundamentalists or insurgents at the cost of the majority. At times to save democracy, undemocratic means may be adopted. Terrorist groups with illogical demands need no patient hearing. They should instead be nipped in the bud. It is not to be forgotten that force is the last resort and if it fails there is no other recourse.

There is no solution to the Punjab problem other than crushing the terrorists by force when all peaceful means have failed. Be it today or tomorrow, the Khalistan movement has to be put down by force to protect the integrity of India. The sooner the better as the greater the delay, the greater the loss of lives. And the government should learn a lesson from it so that it does not repeat this blunder in the years to come. Jyotidipto Ghosh (22), Student, 19, Sarat Bose Road, Hakimpura, Siliguri-734 401.

### Army must be more careful

The purely military solution of exacting retribution has been applied with formidable severity over prolonged periods by the Indian Army—possibly because it is a novice in conducting low intensity operations—which has only ensured periods of tranquility before even more

undertaking combing operations and making arrests. By this time, the terrorists involved have usually taken refuge in safe places and protective undergrowths, leaving the innocent villager to be searched and arrested.

One of the best policies for counter-terror personnel would, therefore, be: Keep your hands clean. Indiscriminate retaliation, killing or arresting of innocents, damaging of property and indiscriminate use of automatic firearms are to be avoided. Interrogation of suspects must be carried out with the utmost care to avoid incurring charges of brutality, which will be exploited by terrorists to the maximum degree.

Syed Zarir Subhani (21), Student, C/o Syed Shafiqul Hussain, Royal Road, Jorhat, Assam-785001

### Police harassing innocents

India has been plagued by terrorists of various hues for a long time. The MNF, the Naxalites, TNV, and now the GNLF. In recent years, the Punjab militants have been in the forefront of Indian terrorism. The government has taken various measures to combat the problem but has met with failure. Now it has given the Punjab police a free hand and, armed with special powers, the police has unleashed a reign of state terror. The police, rarely known for its efficiency and probity, has now exceeded all limits with the new power it has got.

Recently the police, on a hunch that ten terrorists were hiding in Tarn Taran, interrogated its 10,000 residents and ended up without finding even a clue. On June 25, about one lakh pilgrims were barred from offering prayers at the Golden Temple because the police had sealed off the entire area on suspicion that dreaded terrorist Gurjit Singh was

attitude and political insight can act as a corrective against this long-sought-after enemy of ours—terrorism.

Netaji Banerjee (13), Student, 77, Bangur Park, PO Rishra, Hooghly, West Bengal-712248

### WB should be Punjab's model

Yes, why not? Whatever its form, be it democratic or totalitarian, no government should allow lawlessness to prevail or flourish because "lawlessness is the son of anarchy and the brother of violence." These unpleasant companions flourish in communities where common purposes implemented by an ineffective central power are insufficient to enforce peace. The inevitable fruit of anarchy in all civilised societies is war. When a government in an ordered society breaks down, the struggle for power sooner or later assumes the form of violent conflict among individuals, classes, sections, parties and factions.

With some 19 distinct groups active in Punjab, and each trying to assert its supremacy through wanton destruction of human life, the latest carnage by the Sikh terrorists fits into the pattern of petty heroism which they practice. Khalistani terrorism as it appears has, therefore, acquired a momentum of its own, quite detached from what is conventionally referred to as politics. The matter has been further complicated by the overwhelming sense of fear that terrorism understandably generates among common people.

Under the circumstances, unless the government rises to the occasion armed with draconian laws, there remains no hope of curbing terrorism. If the government still remains an onlooker and expresses its reluctance to denounce terrorism by taking stringent

suppress terrorism. No Malliana massacre and acts of tyranny will help in suppressing the outburst of revolt. The root cause of terrorism is the intense hatred in the minds of influential leaders and people of two different religion for each other. Till this weakness is erased from the Indian soil, terrorism will drive its roots deeper and deeper.

But why is it so? There was no talk of Gorkhaland or Khalistan during the times of Gandhi and Nehru. The simple answer is: It is just due to the difference in political administrators of those times and the present. Did anyone hear of kickbacks, corruption, and malpractice at the time of Gandhi and Nehru? The innocent-looking political leaders are now found taking active part in riots and a re-enactment of Jallianwalla Bagh. Everyone involved in riots should be severely punished, with no excuse for the leaders. Can the government of India be that firm in its dealings? If it can, one can rest assured that terrorism will be wiped out.

Thus, living amidst a vast ocean of corruption and malpractice, it is futile to debate: should a democratic state indulge in counter-terror? In a sovereign state it is up to the administrators again to decide whether to punish the miscreants, or not.

But I would like to tell the government that all Sikhs are not terrorists. Therefore, they should not all be killed blindly. Rather the real killers should be persuaded, caught and asked with patience the reason for their killing. The highest level of punishment should be life imprisonment but not killing. This may bring them to their senses but the other way is sure to lead to greater militancy.

Md Sufyan Sidiq (17), Student H-61, unit-4, A.G. Colony, Bhubaneswar. Orissa-7501

Continued on page 11



# From Chandigarh to Delhi

H.S. Hanspal

**K**ewal couldn't leave for the bus terminal early enough. He had his seat reserved, but it was always better to reach well in time. The journey from Chandigarh to Delhi was long and a stubborn, headstrong bloke might occupy the seat and then adjustments would have to be made if one didn't like show downs and unpleasant scenes.

There were still ten minutes left when he reached the bus terminal, but the bus already looked. Climbing in, he made

His way towards his allotted seat. An old woman sat quietly there. The window seat. How could one sacrifice the window seat when the journey was so long.

"This is my seat, *Mata ji*," the world's were almost on his lips when a middle-aged man sitting next to her spoke up, "*Mata ji* has to go to Delhi. In fact, I was waiting for you. I have come only to see her off. She is an old woman. Near the window she will feel a bit more comfortable. You sit next to her please. Please don't mind this. And also, I would like to request you to look after her on the way, please."

Kewal couldn't say a word; and swallowed his annoyance. After all, what could he say? All right, she is an old, frail woman, then why not send her in comfort, why not escort her yourself? You just come and with your 'please, please' inflict her on a fellow passenger and go away quietly. And the window seat at that! He didn't say anything. That was the trouble in coming late. Had he come in time and occupied his seat, the man would have made adjustments elsewhere. These blokes! The just leave you holding the baby.

Long journey. Had there been some other convivial passenger, they would have talked about something or the other. Had there been a fairer face the journey could have had a romantic flavour. Or if nothing else, at least one could look outside the window and watch the fleeting landscape—the trees whizzing past, glimpses of oncoming vehicles, trucks, buses scooters overtaking the bus at terrific speeds, or so it seemed. But now neither a beautiful face, nor the landscape outside; an old woman who was a burden what with his moral duty of looking after her. '*Beta*, get me some water. Do, this, do that, May God bless you...' He could imagine the old woman's whine.

Kewal sat on in a sullen mood. This was the time when gloriously free he could relax

and lose himself in fanciful musings in rhythm with the roar of the bus. But fate had tricked him. If he looked straight ahead, all he saw were the heads of the passengers sitting in front or the religious symbols inscribed on the windscreen over the driver's head. If he looked sideways, the landscape through the window seemed a remote phenomenon.

The old woman was leaning against the window and dozing.

She would reach somehow. That middle aged man must have been her son or some relative, or could be a neighbour. Somebody would receive the old crone at Delhi. Here the man had appealed to him to take care of her, but there once he destination was reached nobody would bother to thank him even or to enquire whether she had been duly looked after. Everyone would go his own way. And the old woman had been sent on this long six hour journey all alone. Even a normal, healthy man could get tired. Then, on the way the problem of food, tea, water, even the urge to relieve oneself. But people always reached somehow.

Kewal's mother also used to reach her destination somehow. They could never imagine that she was capable of reaching on her own. Totally illiterate, all she could do was to go from home to market and back. Once in a year, she would go to Amritsar. For sentimental

reasons, she wanted to spend a few days in her old ancestral home and in the process she would collect the rent from the tenants apart from airing and cleaning the locked room which was kept for her personal. She would be deposited in the train from Delhi and somebody would receive her at the destination. The same routine was followed on her return journey. Somebody would help her to the train there and here they would receive her. But that was a train journey and decidedly more convenient. Whereas this was a bus journey!

They reached Ambala. He got down to stretch his legs a little. He had tea and strolled around. Then he remembered the old woman. Perhaps she might be in need of something. She was holding an empty glass which doubtless she had brought out of her bag.

"*Beta*, get me some water." She said immediately on seeing him.

"Anything else, anything to eat?" He asked after bringing the water.

"No, *beta* I have brought my food with me. God bless you."

The bus left Ambala and he felt drowsy amid the whine of the engine. He couldn't relax properly without falling on the old woman. He didn't feel like reading the magazines he had with him. Nobody to talk to. What on earth could he talk to the old woman? She did not look the talking type at all.

Moreover, her feeble old voice could hardly have been heard above the din of the bus.

At Panipat, the old woman got down from the bus, probably to relieve herself. Ten minutes passed and still she had not returned. The driver started honking the horn and the conductor blew the whistle. Instinctively, Kewal shouted, "Driver Saab, stop. The old woman sitting here hasn't come back yet."

"And how long are we to wait here, Babu Saab? Enough horns I have sounded," back came the retort.

"Wait a minute. I'll go find her."

Kewal got down. He found the old woman, quite bewildered an trying to locate her bus.

"Which is the Delhi bus, brother, tell me, anybody. Where is the Delhi bus?" Panic stricken, she was wailing in her feeble voice. Evidently from among the buses stopping there she had been unable to recognize her bus. Kewal brought her aboard.

Exactly the same way, his own, illiterate mother also must have been doing her journeys. Somebody or the other must have been helping her at the right moment.

Once there had been no hope of her reaching Delhi at all. She had gone to Amritsar on her annual trip Back home, at Delhi, Kewal's father had suddenly expired. Kewal himself was away on tour. Somehow he was contacted on phone and he could reach in the morning with great difficulty. His mother was away at Amritsar. The relatives had sent a telegram to her, but could she have received it? Could she come back to Delhi unaccompanied and unescorted? Could she have a last look at her dead husband's face, the companion of her life through wind and rain? Everyone had thought it to be impossible. She just couldn't have come. Only if somebody could go and bring her back! But it would have meant a delay

of another twenty four hours and the body couldn't be kept that long.

Only if she herself could reach somehow could she have a last look at her dead husband's face. But it seemed a sheer impossibility. It would have been nothing sort of a miracle.

They decided to take away the body to the cremation ground in the evening after 4 P.M. If she could reach by the deluxe a miracle of miracles—just a remote possibility, a chance in a thousand. But nobody thought of sending anybody to check train arrivals at the New Delhi Railway Station.

Taking out the body from home, what with one thing and another, it was nearly 5 P.M. when they reached the cremation ground. They were setting the logs for the pyre when suddenly, wailing and weeping, beating her breasts, his mother reached the cremation ground. She had reached home just after they had taken out the body and she was brought to the cremation ground in a taxi by two neighbouring women.

The miracle had happened! But how?

"Mother, how could you come? When did you get the news?" Kewal asked between sobs.

"I never got the news, son. Nobody told me the truth. I came to know of Babuji's death only here. The telegram came at two in the night. The tenant's son told me that Babuji was seriously ill, I must reach immediately. And then he came to the station to help me get into the train in the morning. In the train also I showed the telegram to a man sitting near me. He also said that Babu ji was seriously ill. *Hai*, nobody told me that he was no more. Nobody told me the truth." And she beat her breast.

And had she been told the truth, would she have survived the shock? Would she have reached? More likely, she would have fainted.





"But mother, from the station how did you reach home?"

"I felt my heart sinking. Something might have happened to Babuji, I felt dizzy and sat down there in the porch. Somebody, God bless him, gave me water to drink and put me in a scooter and when I reached home...." she could speak no further.



The bus had reached Delhi terminal. He was waiting for his suitcase to be brought down from the roof of the bus. The old woman was standing near him. Nobody had come to receive

her. Nobody was there to give a hand to get her tin box when the coolie on the roof of the bus shouted for it to be reclaimed.

"My box, beta. God bless you, lend a hand."

Kewal caught hold of the box as the coolie released his grip from above, balanced it in his hands and placed it near the old woman.

"Has nobody come to take you home?" Kewal couldn't resist asking.

"A letter was sent, but nobody has come. Perhaps they did not get the letter."

"Then how will you go, Maa."

"I don't know, beta. Somehow God has helped me to come here. He will show the way further on also."

Where have you to go, mother?"

The old woman unfastened the knot at the end of her dupatta and took out a crumpled piece of paper. On it was written the address.

"Come, mother, I will take you home."

And Kewal placed the old woman's box on top of his suitcase over the coolie's head and proceeded towards the taxi stand.

## The Egg and I

R. C. Kapoor

Last week  
Was stolen  
My hen's egg  
The hen  
Did not protest  
But I was  
Quite upset  
The next day  
It was my hen  
And I protested.  
My audience  
Was flabbergasted,  
The press blasted  
"The thief must be arrested"  
Was the cry  
In wilderness.  
Our local leader  
Addressed a meeting  
As if he were dating.  
Next  
They snatched  
My hen-house  
And killed  
The hen's spouse.  
Bewildered  
I was waiting

While the police  
Was debating  
Whether it was  
Robbery or dacoity  
And I was  
All anxiety.  
The national leaders  
Awoke  
And like Zarathustra  
Spoke  
"Security has been  
tightened"  
We were frightened—  
Majority  
And then  
Minority  
Had been silenced.  
I croaked  
And groaned  
And to myself  
Owned  
I had lost  
Myself  
And the rest  
Was silence...

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## Democratic State

Continued from page 9

### Dishonourable action

**T**errorism is primarily a socioeconomic problem. Unequal distribution of resources and gross social injustice engender a sense of deep despondency among the deprived people. This sense of despondency gradually gives birth to anger, particularly in the minds of the young who tend to be easily swayed by the catchy slogans of regionalism, provincialism and religious obscurantism. A handful of parochial-minded and self-seeking leaders, by their rabble-rousing speeches, manage to incite the disgruntled people. Thus terrorism is born in a country.

**But a state cannot stamp out terrorism by counter-terror. Counter-terror is the indiscriminate killing and arrest of the persons suspected to have any links with subversive activities. The arrested persons are ruthlessly tortured and the question of justice is temporarily shelved. The administration is bestowed with limitless powers which can only be enjoyed by a totalitarian regime.**

Experience says that all these notwithstanding, a state scores little success in curbing terrorism. For the main reasons which gave rise to the problem of terrorism still exist.

A democratic state cannot afford to indulge in such repressive measures as it has to work within the framework of a constitution that does not allow it to let loose a reign of terror to combat terrorism.

Of course, it should take required administrative measures to meet the situation, but at the same time, it should also demonstrate its eagerness to resolve the basic economic and social problems of the people concerned. Once this goal is achieved, it would be much easier for the state to tackle the situation.

Therefore, a democratic state should ignore the provocation of the terrorists and always uphold the democratic principles enshrined in its constitution. Before indulging in counter-terror, it should consider that as soon as it tramples on any of those principles, it would lose the great honour of being regarded

as a democratic state.

Maya Das Majumder (29), Housewife, C/o Mr Bimal Das Majumder, P O Durgapur, Bally, Howrah

### A redundant question

**T**heoretically, counter-terror is not expected from a democratic state, but in practice this expectation is belied. The US government's involvement with the contra rebels of Nicaragua is an admitted fact; so is the Sri Lanka government's counter-terror measures. On the domestic front we have the PAC's involvement in the Meerut massacre. All these are unethical and yet an accepted fact of life.

In India communal riots have become a perennial feature, arising from ethnic differences, geographical imbalances, religious intolerance and the creation of linguistic monolithic states. Poverty-stricken Indians are steeped in caste and communal conflicts. This is because "democracy is the opiate of the masses" where the people are self-deluded into believing that the real power vests in them.

**We have a peculiar situation in our country where policemen, instead of being committed to preserving law and order, side with particular groups in communal and caste clashes. One may argue that such incidents are not instigated by the government but are the outcome of individual bias. The answer to that should be found in the neutrality of the security forces. It is obvious that political power and interest groups motivate the evil-doers.**

The government cannot do anything about it because our "democratic" Constitution is full of loopholes. As things stand, the question whether a democratic state should indulge in counter-terror is redundant. It cannot be helped. Neeraj Tripathi (18), Student, Udaypath, R.G. Baruah Road, Guwahati, Assam-781024.

### Counter-terror not prudent

**E**volving through the experiments and experiences of ages, the democratic system of administration is undoubtedly

the most modern, suitable and popular form of statecraft. Individual freedom, personal security, social peace and economic development envisaged in the democratic society reinforce public confidence in the system itself.

**Owing to human weaknesses and political corruption, the basic principles of the democratic system are very often violated or exploited to gain narrow, mean and selfish designs. And at this point, when the values and ideals are ignored or overlooked, a section of society finds the path of violence and terrorism as the only way to achieve its goal. For every act of terrorism, there is a cause and there is a set goal, maybe political or otherwise, resulting from a sense of insecurity or an act of injustice or denial of liberty; and this aspect is seldom given adequate attention.**

Terrorism in itself is an outrageous expression of violent feelings which cannot, therefore, assume a decisive role or help achieve the goal for which it has been resorted to. The objective of the terrorist may, at best, be to get a sort of publicity or recognition by widespread fear, commotion and terror.

Even then, it would not be an act of prudence on the part of the state to adopt terrorism as a means to eradicate it. The "bullet-for-bullet campaign" is bound to generate more contempt, hatred, mistrust and acts of terrorism than to contain terrorism. Terrorism being condemned by one and all, the state's indulgence in it would be paradoxical as well as ridiculous.

The battle against terrorism cannot be won by handing over the reins of administration to the police and Army with unlimited and unchecked powers which will vitiate the atmosphere further and destroy the public accountability envisaged in the democratic system.

Restrictions and limitations of democracy not withstanding, the challenge has to be tackled by devising effective measures to ensure that terrorists are identified and punished, wounded feelings of affected people assuaged, civil liberty not tampered with, confidence and faith in the values of the democratic system instilled in the public mind and sympathy, love and non-violence, preached by Mahatma Gandhi, made the catchwords of the day.

M.A. Ahad (52), Govt. Service, C-19 Unit IV, Bhubaneswar, Orissa-751001

## "Call to Eschew Killings"

"Some friends and well wishers of the Sikhs" have called upon the militant youth of Punjab to unilaterally and unconditionally eschew the practice of killing innocent people as a means for achieving political objectives.

In a statement released by Mr. Balraj Puri, Convenor "Committee for a Dialogue on Punjab," they urged the militants to pursue their struggle for justice and dignity

in a manner becoming of the true message of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

The signatories to the statement include Besides Mr. Puri, Syed Shahabuddin MP, leading social scientist Professor Rajni Kothari, Dalit leader Bhagwan Das and convenors of National Convention against Communalism and Threat to Diversity, Vaskar Nandy and Professor Salmaan hashmi.

Recalling the fact that they

had never wavered in raising their voice against injustice to the Sikhs, they said, "We would be failing in our duty as the friends of Sikhs at this gravest hour in their history, if we did not warn them that innocent killings brutalise men, negates the teachings of the gurus and the traditions of the panth and undermines the sympathy for the Sikh cause in the country and abroad."

Signatories assure the Sikhs that if such killings stop, their moral and political stature and the strength of those who stand by them would be multiplied for fighting against injustice and redressal of grievances.



# Struggle to Save Gandhamardhan

Pandurang Hegde

**T**he tribals living around Gandhamardhan hills in Orissa have launched a sustained struggle to save these hills from ecological ruin. Bharat Aliminium Company (BALCO) started exploiting Bauxite from these hills. The company built a colony in Paikmal, in Sambalpur district at the foot hills of Gandhamardhan. It is only when the Balco started initial open cast mining on the hills that people realised its destructive nature.

Poornabasi Bhoi, an old woman of Khandijaran said "It is during the rainy season that we saw red water coming down from the streams. The silt has dired our streams." The stream "Rane Javan" is full of pebbles and silt. It is a dead streams now. As Kuldhar Sabar said "This stream had water through out the year. Now it has no water even during the rainy season." It was in September that he showed the Rane Jhavan (Rane stream) fully choked with the silt brought down from the mines on the top of Gandhamardhan. A minor irrigation project built in 1984 in Khandi Jaran received the maximum amount of silt. The destruction of these streams opened the eyes of people around surrounding villages.

## Destruction of Forests

**A**nother factor contributing to the awareness of people is the fear of destruction of forests. Gashiram Mallik, a tribal leader from Manbhang village said "What will we eat once the forests in Gandhamardhan is cut down? We get tubers, we get fruits and vegetables". At a stretch he gave names of 15 fruits trees. He said that these hills provided them food all through the year. Almost 20,000 tribals depend on Gandhamardhan for their basic need of food and employment. A part to the hills fall under Kalahandi district. Though Kalahandi is well known for facing acute drought, in this part in Gandhamardhan tribals are secure against starvation. They get tubers, fruits and find employment on forest produce. Thus, the greenery of Gandhamardhan is supporting the tribal life in around 80 villages. As these tribals realised that mining is going to destroy these forests, they determined to fight, even at the cost of sacrificing their lives.

The struggle was initiated by Gandhamardhan Surakhya Yuva Parishad (GYSP). Initially the government arrested many people and put them into jail. Instead of creating fear among tribals, it gave a greater confidence among people. Dhanmati, a middle age woman from Salepali said "I was in Jail for 7 days. Initially I was very much afraid. But once I entered the jail with 13 women and children I gained confidence" she said "I am ready to sacrifice my life but will not allow

destruction of Gandhamardhan". Many people came forward to court arrest. This courage is something unique in an area of tribals who are illiterate and they used to run away at the sight of a Khaki uniform. Eventually the district judge at Sambalpur ordered the release of people arrested as it was illegal and without any grounds. This judgement gave a moral boost to the non-violent movement and enhanced their confidence.

The direct action was launched by constructing a gate towards the approach to Gandhamardhan hill. People gathered at this gate and stopped the BALCO vehicles that brought down the bauxite ore. People forced BALCO to stop all the activities on Gandhamardhan. Since June 11, 1986 the work of BALCO has come to stand still. Even now a small group of people assemble at this gate and keep watch.

## Blockades

**I**n addition to this gate, numerous blockades were erected by people around Paikmal. People stopped vehicles which were carrying cement and steel to the construction site. These vehicles were stopped for days and they had to return without proceeding to BALCO campus. Large number of people gathered at Salepali, Peepal Kantha and erected a human blockade. Even the local MLA's car was blocked as he was in favour of the BALCO project. They shouted the slogans "The opening of mines in Gandhamardhan is destruction in the name of development" And their one point demand is "we do not want BALCO"

The central governments Department of environment confirmed the environmental destruction likely to be caused by BALCO. But a central committee appointed under the chairmanship of B.D. Nagchaudhury was in favour of setting up the BALCO plant. This committee concluded that the mining activities will not seriously affect the flora and fauna of the hill. The local people questioned this report. Gautam Biswal, one of the activists said "Even before starting actual mining operations the work of setting up of crusher plant has choked the streams. The forests are destroyed. So we can imagine what happens when the mining starts." The tribals had experienced the disastrous effects and are not willing to believe this report. As Raidhar Lohar said "Nagchaudhury and the committee members were here for four hours. How can they say anything about the damage? We have lived here and know more about our hills and forests." Yet, these tribals are a part of the forests and Gandhamardhan is the base for their survival.

## No Decision

**S**o far the government has not taken any final decision about the project. But the struggle continues and GYSP has taken up other issues concerning tribals. One of the issues is concerning land. The non-tribals have taken possession of the land belonging to tribals at several places. With the increasing awareness among tribals, they are getting united

to oppose this benami possession of land. In Khandijaran two tribals have got back 8 acres of land, which was taken by the local moneylender.

During this year the drought condition is acute and the state government is not interested in helping the villagers because they are opposing BALCO. In Paikamal block, the state government has reduced the development budget. The movement to save Gandhamardhan has taken up this issue with state government and is demanding the right share for these villages.

In Manbhang village the tribals were compelled to take water from a reservoir constructed by BALCO. This reservoir was built to supply water to BALCO colony. As the crops were drying up, the

tribals jointly decided to take the water to their fields. The crops have survived, but the police came to Manbhang to find out why the tribals should not be arrested on the charge of breach of reservoir. This issue has been taken up by the movement and the police has agreed not to arrest tribals.

They are also planning to take up the issue of Bamboo being supplied to the paper mill at the cost of sacrificing employment of tribals.

Gradually the Gandhamardhan struggle is widening the base and taking up various issues of social justice. The awareness among the tribals has enhanced the confidence and they are determined to save the Gandhamardhan that supports the lives of 20,000 people in a remote area.

## Letters

### FLAG IN MALGUDI

Sir—The October 23 instalment of the TV serial "Malgudi Days" was an apt rendering of the 1930 Satyagraha. But there was one false note. The Tri colour showed saffron, white and green. Actually, the Congress flag in 1930 had a red stripe and not a saffron one. It was the Karachi session of the Congress in 1931 that appointed a Flag Committee, consisting of Nehru, Patel, Azad, Master Tara Singh, Kaka Kalelkar, Pattabhi and Dr Hardikar. This committee unanimously recommended that "the National Flag should be (of) kesari or saffron colour, having on it at the left top quarter the charkha in blue" since, it said, that colour is "non-communal" and "is associated with this ancient country buy long tradition".

However, since Gandhiji did not approve of it, the recommendation was dropped. But since Master Tara Singh insisted on at least a saffron stripe, that same was substituted in place of the red stripe. And that happened some time in 1934—four years after this particular Malgudi Days scenario!— Yours, etc., K.R. MALKANT

New Delhi October 26.  
(in The Statesman)

## Mechanical Unity

Continued from page 7

### Language

**T**he policy makers do not realise what harm that has been done by not giving Urdu its due place. I was appointed chairman of an official committee in 1970 By Mrs Gandhi to enquire into the status of Urdu. We observed that since in our normal schools Urdu teaching was not encouraged a large number of lower middle and middle class Muslims who wanted their children to learn Urdu sent them to madarasas. These are by and large managed by obscurantist clergy who also teach obscurantism and divisiveness from the very beginning. In the report we recommended that Urdu be added to the primary level in the schools but the books teaching and the classes should be common. Only script may be different. So that by the time they pass out the primary they have learnt a script and the shared the composite ethos of India. Similarly the three-language formula has not been implemented honestly. This has harmed the unity movement. Unless we clearly understand what is meant by the unity its problems cannot be solved.

**One of the sad mistakes made is that the unity is confused with the uniformity. Efforts to erase**

**the minority culture and languages in the name of unity causes friction ultimately end in riots. One language and one culture is not our objective. All our languages have a rich heritage. We adopted Hindi to replace English and not other languages. Therefore, all those who speak Hindi must manifest more accommodative, flexible, reasonable and responsive attitude of they wish that another person should learn their language then it has to be done with love and understanding. The basic concept must be kept in mind: we are seeking a unity of diversity and not uniformity.**

**I am strongly in favour of separation of religion and politics because secularism essentially means that. But how do we do it? Every political party in India has at one stage or another compromised its integrity by coalising with one communal party or the other. We object to other's doing it. A law may be made that any one who is an office-bearer in any religious or communal organisation is barred from contesting the polls. But no law can substitute national consensus. And this needs a collective will of all political interest. The immediate gains naturally must yield place to Nation's cause.**

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# Failure of Fundamentalism

**Islam, Politics and the State**  
edited by Asghar Khan, New  
Delhi, Select Book Service  
Syndicate, 1986, PP.  
281+XV, Rs. 250.00

**A**ir marshal Asghar Khan, a former Commander-in-chief of the Pakistan Air Force (1957-1965) and leader of the Tehrik-i-Istiqal, which is now past of the "Movement for the Restoration of Democracy" opposed to General Zia has done a significant service in editing a volume of 11 essays by prominent and politically independent Muslim scholars to critically analyse the nature and consequences of president Zia-ul-Haq's Islami-cisation measures.

The scholars include Eqbal Ahmad, Suroor Irfani, Abbas Rashid, Zafaryab Ahmed, Ziani Haque, Omar Asghar Khan, Parvez Amirali Hoodbhoy, Abdul Hameed Nayyar, Akmal Hussain, Feroz Ahmed and Mohammad Asghar Khan.

The essays include the theoretical background exploring various aspects of the relationship between Islam and Politics, progressive and right-wing. Islamic movements particularly with reference to Pakistan, its ideological background and process of change. The authors marshal historical material and current evidence to expose both the cynical motivations that lie behind measures of Islamicisation and the damage they are doing in various aspects of social and political life.

## The Islam

**T**he general line of argument is that Islam is not ritualistic obedience to the creator alone, nor reverence to and obedience to His messenger without understanding the purpose and meaning of that message. However, many so-called "Ulema" (religious scholars) who have provided support to autocrats have twisted religion to suit their masters, and there has been no dearth of hypocrites masquerading as religious Acholars and divines.

In modern times the

opportunistic "ulema" of the middle ages have been replaced by a class of so-called religious scholars whose vision unfortunately is not broader than that of their predecessors. They two wear intellectual blinkers and either fail to see reason or are ever willing to work for those whose aim is to exploit and suppress the people. This phenomenon prevails throughout the Muslim world and where as the west fought this battle and defeated obscurantists towards the end of the middle ages, the Muslim world has still to come to grips with this problem. This battle against ignorance and exploitation, which most of the Muslim world has yet to win is made more complicated by the exploitation of religion by virted interests, monarchs, mullas, dictators, usurpers and opportunists.

## Religion and Politics

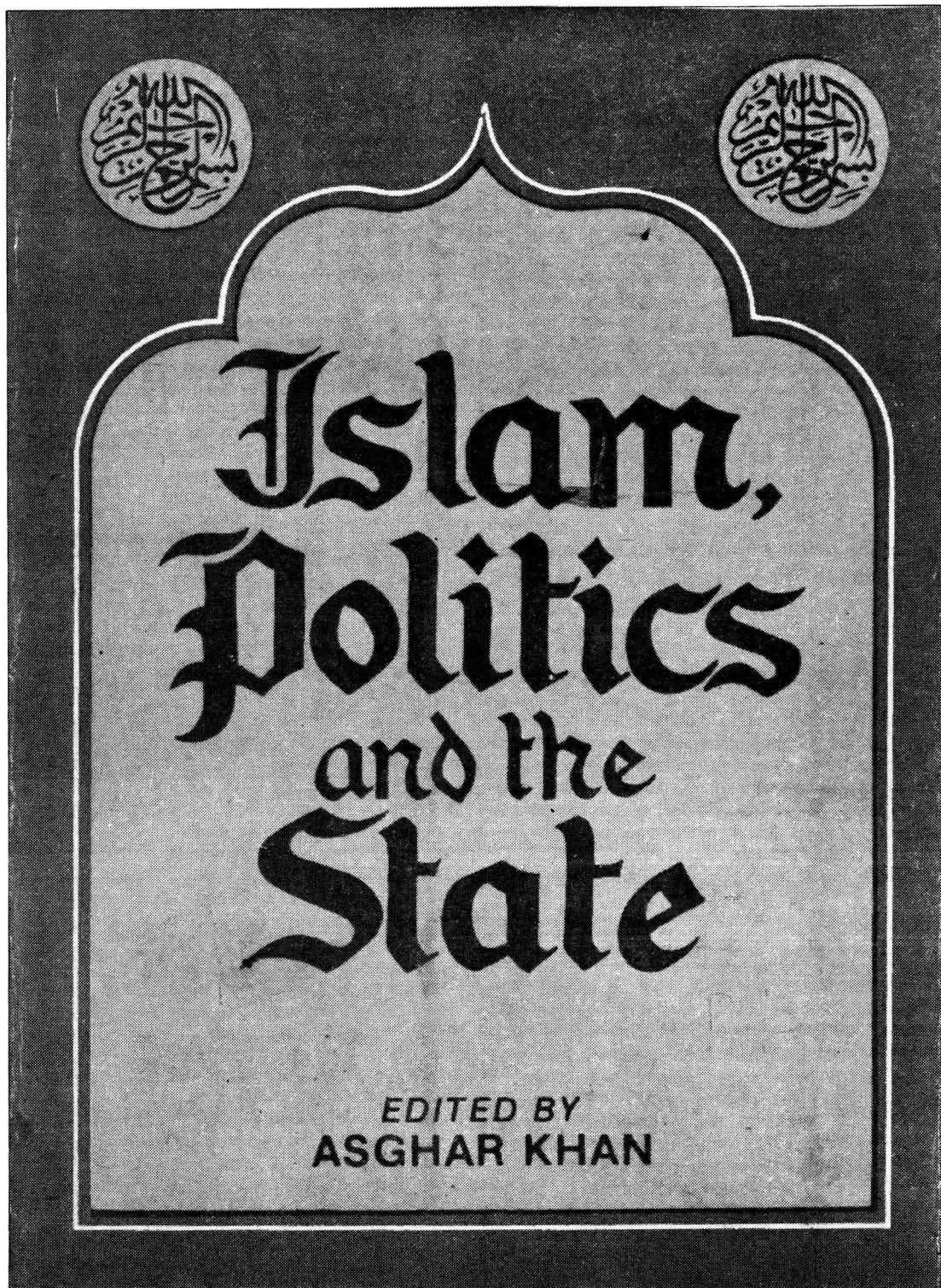
**W**hile discussing the relationship between religion and politics, Eqbal Ahmed argues that this phenomenon is not exclusive to Muslim countries but is to be found in other present day societies as well. In the United States, Israel and India for example, religion plays a significant role in the political process. In the same content Suroor Irfani points that even within Islam ulema has played contrasting role in different periods of history. Thus, whereas Islamic injunctions have been relied upon by some 'Ulema' to confer legitimacy on authoritarian rule, Quranic verses and prophetic traditions have been cited by others to exhort the people to rise against tyranny and oppression.

Eqbal Ahmed, Abbas Rashid and Suroor Irfani in their essays bring out the 'secular' nature of political movements and state power in Muslim society, not withstanding the use of religious symbolism as a rallying point. The intellectual implications of the transformation of the egalitarian nature of Muslim society into an elaborate bureaucratic structure, dominated by strongly entrenched vested interests are

been used to suppress the people, as has been done in the case of less privileged 'nationalities' in Pakistan. In his opinion slogans like "Islam in danger" have been used as an opiate in the past and the Ideology of 'Pakistan' is now being pushed down the throats of the people of the smaller

sections of population on the other.

The work ends with a discussion of Pakistan's geopolitical options in the wake of the Soviet invasions of Abghanistan, the Iranian Revolution, the United State's interests in Pakistan's military establishment and the domestic



examined by Zioul Haque and Omar Asghar Khan.

## Use of Ideology

**F**eroze Ahmed, in his essay, discusses the manner in which ideology has

provinces. In the same content Akmal Hussain discusses the failure of fundamentalist Islamic ideology as a cementing force. It is pointed out by Abbas Rashid and Omar Asghar Khan that the Islam that is rooted in the popular mind has been popularised not by the orthodox ulema but by the Sufis, who were culturally and socially much closer to the masses.

Akmal Hussain and Zafaryab Ahmed discuss the manner in which the Jamant-i-Islam functions as a political organisation, its philosophy, and its relationship to the military establishment Abbas Rashid, Zafaryab Ahmed, Akmal Hussain, Pervez Hoodbhoy and Nayyar argue that the Islamisation of the country's institutions bears a strong imprint of the Jamaat's Islamic model. Islamisation appears to have been undertaken to secure a future for regime that depends on terrorising the reactionary

political situation by Asghar Khan. There is also a discussion of the national security implications of Pakistan's adherence to an aggressive fundamentalist and doctrinaire Islamic ideology.

In view of vast areas covered with ample theoretical background and help of historical information the book not only makes a comprehensive reading but provides a useful analysis of the nature of state in Pakistan. It is a warning against the concept of theocratic state any where and a call to the Muslim intellectuals to assert themselves in favour of democratic, egalitarian and progressive values of Islam to take it out of the crisis.

The book is a very useful and stimulating reading particularly at the particular juncture when every where fundamentalism seems to be delivering political rewards.

**A.S. Narang**



**Stoned to death in 20th century Pakistan:** Sufi tribesman in Pakistan's Northwest Mohmand Agency stone to death a man for his involvement in a bomb blast in which a child was killed and a woman and a child injured. The sentence was pronounced by a "Jirga," a peoples' assembly, of the Sufi tribesmen.



## Children lay the Foundation stone of Guru Harkrishan Public School.



The foundation stone for the new building of Guru Harkrishan Public School India Gate was laid on 3 November. A large number of prominent Delhi litizens, parents and dignotries were present on the occasion. Departing from the conventional practice of getting the foundation stone laid by a leader ar prominent personality the school authorities made a group of young students lay the stone.

The pictures below show the young children carrying the soil for foundation stone and Mr. L.S. Boparai and others watching.



### BUDDHISM

*One should not give way to anger, but should control it. He who controls anger has power far greater than those who give way to it. The one is master of his emotion while the other is mastered by it. Hatred is damaging to mankind and should be eliminated.*

### ANGER

### SIKHISM

*Avarice is a dog,  
Falsehood a sweeper,  
Cheating is the eating of a dead body;  
Slander is the dirt that my tongue tasteth,  
And anger is the fire that burns me as at cremation,  
I indulge in nothing but self-esteem;  
See, these are my doings, O Lord.*

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पहुंचेगी। इसे  
भरकर हमारे  
पास भेजिए।

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आजीवन/के लिए भेजिए पत्रिका का शुल्क  
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# Politics and Pathology of Sati

consider the practice criminal. The second is opposed to prima-facie evidence of villagers in Deorala. The third is clearly illegal and unconstitutional after the enactment of the Indian Constitution. The right to freedom of religion guaranteed in Article 25 of the constitution is not absolute.

By Article 25(b) social welfare and reform in the practice of religion may be brought about by enactment of law. This has been done in the case of laws abolishing dowry, untouchability polygamy etc. In fact most of Hindu law in the area of marriage, succession, divorce has been secularised. The attempt to re-Hinduize law by reference to a few ambivalent versus in the Dharma Shastras, Manu and Yagna Volkya which do not enjoin it as a religious practise is both objectionable and obscurantist. The authority of Hindu leaders to interpret the law cannot be assumed by them, the power lies with the courts and the legislatures after the enactment of the Indian Constitution.

across party lines, visited the Sati Sthal to pay obeisance to Mahasati Roop Kanwar.

The Centre's emissary, the Union Minister of State for Home Mr. P. Chidambaram, went to Jaipur only on September 19, three days after the Chunri Mahatsav, when public opinion against Sati had begun to well outside the State and media attention had begun to focus more sharply on it.

## The Critical Report

It was only after Mr. Chidambaram had submitted a critical report to the Prime Minister, criticising the State Government for its reaction and saying that the Sati incident pointed to the presence of a 'supportive social and political culture,' that the Prime Minister made his first official statement on September 27, describing Roop Kanwar's death as a 'National Shame'.

With the Prime Minister publicly declaring that the Sati incident was "utterly reprehensible and barbaric" things began to move swiftly. The next day the Cabinet

fundamentalist aspirations, the misuse of Doordarshan to promote religious sentiments cannot but encourage aggressive and offensive attitudes that jeopardise the rights of vulnerable groups. While no one can object to the right of private worship, public persons are expected to abstain from Yagnas for their own or any one else's life in a country where, as the High Court of Allahabad in 1914 stated a little encouragement endorses an unscientific temper and obscurantist practises.

In this context, it is important to ask how safe are women in free India? If the State cannot use its authority and is seen as weak and vacillating, it is but natural that local groups will seek to assert their power and impose their authoritarian outdated practices to delegitimise the law. Where so much superstition abounds, making Sati a criminal offence is seen as a conscious illegality. Reverence is paid to outdated practice, the law only invites irreverence and contempt.

The assertion of fundamentalist groups poses a serious threat to the survival of women. This is true in all communities. The judgment in Mary Roy's

Case (1986) 2 SCC p. 209, giving women equal inheritance rights invited the hostility of lenders of the church. Shahbanu's case invited the hostility of Muslim fundamentalists and the Imams including the vociferous Mr. Syed Shahbuddin of the Janata Party. It led to the resignation of Mr. Arif Mohammad Khan of the Congress (I). The demand for exclusion of the Sikhs from the definition of Hindu implied the imposition of Sikh Personal Law, which is anti-women.

The outrage and denunciation of Sati by women in the capital invited the provocative editorial in Jain Satta of September, 18, "who are we to condemn Sati? A handful of westernized people cannot condemn the ritual when lakhs of people have accorded it religious sanction"—raises a critical counter-question—who defines women? "Are women to be defined by religious tradition or its images, or scriptures; are we to be defined by cultural expectations or family roles? Or will women take their own self definition seriously in terms of Constitutional values of equality, dignity and sanctity of all human beings." (Speaking of Faith: Kali for Women).

Ultimately women will have to assume responsibility and repudiate the ethics of self sacrifice and substitute it for the ethic of survival. Repudiate the expectations of a patriarchal society which denies them political significance and autonomy for the ethic of individualism. Repudiate outdated religious practices for egalitarian Constitutional values. Transform the myths of religion and the status of dependent Goodnesses into autonomous and self assertive persons defining their own destiny. The ideal of Indian womanhood like Sati, Savitri and Sita will have to be replaced by ideals like Maitreyi who rejected wealth for knowledge and Meerabai who transcended through Bhakti the social condition imposed on women. Women will have to assume responsibility to remind men of the quintessential humanism of religion in a country where politics has distorted secular values for political accommodation. A new ethic which is pro-life and pro-women must be the function of education. Women must be taught that her ultimate responsibility and dharma is to herself and achieving the best in herself.

**In this context, it is important to ask how safe are women in free India? If the State cannot use its authority and is seen as weak and vacillating, it is but natural that local groups will seek to assert their power and impose their authoritarian outdated practices to delegitimise the law. Where so much superstition abounds, making Sati a criminal offence is seen as a conscious illegality. Reverence is paid to outdated practice, the law only invites irreverence and contempt.**

## Constitutional Commitment

Without a commitment to constitutional values the courts and the law lose their efficacy and sanction. The conduct of the advocate General Mr. Nathulal Jain on September 15th, in the writ petition filed to stay the celebration of the 'Chunri Mahatsav' on the 16th by several Rajasthan woman's organisations before Justice Suresh Agarwal in the Rajasthan High Court was pusillanimous. To Justice Suresh Agarwal's persistent query he maintained 'I am neither for nor against Sate.' He grudgingly gave an assurance to the court on Government instructions that the Chunri Utsav would be prohibited. It is well known that not only was this flouted but four lakhs of people attended the ceremony.

Earlier the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Mr. Harideo Joshi, took nine days to react to the Sati in Deorala and the Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi twenty-three days. The State Government not merely turned a blind eye to the twelve days long frenzied festivities that followed Roop Kanwar's tragic death, but it permitted four lakh people to attend the Chunri Mahatsav (veil ceremony) in Deorala, despite a court order banning it. Politicians, cutting

Committee on political Affairs decided to issue a Central Ordinance which would and this practice irrevocably.

The Rajasthan Chief Minister was summoned to the national capital and told that a central ordinance would be preferred to state legislation, which is what the Rajasthan Cabinet was contemplating. Within two days of this announcement the centre prepared a draft ordinance.

But the very next day, in a surprise reversal, the Rajasthan Government passed the Rajasthan Sati (Prevention) Ordinance, 1987, following an informal meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs which decided to shelve the Central Legislation. Why did the Government take so long to respond and why did the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs reverse its decision to pass a Central Ordinance?

The self assertiveness of Rajput youth and their nostalgic desire to recapture, a glorious past, the militant demands of Sati Dharma Raksha Samiti and its members like Mr. Kalyan Singh Kalvi (Janata) the increasing authoritarianism of local bodies like the Rajput Sabha and the disrespect delay and defiance by law enforcing agencies, the vacillation of both the State and Central Governments to act decisively in dealing with



Yuva Dharma Raksha Samiti members at a rally in front of the Rajasthan Assembly on Wednesday to protest against the recently passed Sati (prevention) Ordinance. UNI



# Politics and Pathology of Sati-II

Continued from last Issue.

## Roop Kanwar

**W**as Roop Kanwar an ordinary girl with extraordinary courage at the tender age of eighteen? Or was she an ordinary girl whose courage collapse with the psycho-logical pressures and expectations and customs of her society? Her photograph along with Mall Singh, her modest young husband adorns the spacious porch of her in-laws comfortable looking house. Her mother-in-law and sister-in-law are inside but no one can enter. There is a hushed silence as I am informed that Sumer Singh the father-in-law and Pushpendra Singh the brother-in-law of Roop Kanwar have been arrested "illegally". Her mother-in-law has not been arrested because she is 'insane'. I think to myself this is a familiar plea in criminal cases. Roop Kanwar walked to the pyre which is only a few yards away in broad day light. Mall Singh, died in the hospital. His body was brought from Sikar hospital at 7.40 a.m. in the morning of 4th September, 1987. She had spent barely twenty three days with Mall Singh, who was constantly ill. Most of the time she was in Jaipur with her parents. Was she overpoweringly in love with her husband or deeply traumatized by his death or by the thought of leading an austere life as a young widow? With what thoughts did she walk to the pyre? What were the options—renunciation in life or renunciation of life?

Did no one stop her, because of the ubiquitous "curse" of Sati Mata? Why is there a conspiracy of silence? From 1.40 to 3 P.M. her body was burning before 4000 people. Were they all entranced, mesmerized or paralyzed? Not one police Officer arrived from 7.40 A.M. to 3 P.M. The first arrest was only on 9th September, five days after the incident. Sumer Singh was arrested after the 'Chunri' ceremony. Mr. Saini, Chairman of the Local Municipality stated that an eye-witness had reported to him that Roop Kanwar waved her hands in desperation as the wood that had been stacked around her shoulders began to burn. But her cries were drowned by the frenzied slogans of "SATI MATA KI JAI".

### Why were her parents informed only after her body had been burnt?

Why did the Director General of Police who was on leave on September 4 extend his leave? Why did the D.I.G., also a Rajput, barate the Superintendent of Police for arresting Pushpendra Singh, the brother-in-law of Roop Kanwar? Why were the Collector and Superintendent of Police both Kayasthas transferred for taking firm action? Why were the Deputy Superintendent of Police and the Sub-Divisional Officer who belonged to the Scheduled Caste subjected to the same fate? If Rajput links and bonds are so intricate and deep, was Roop Kanwar's death then an act of liberation or an

"Yes", we give what we can, but there are no dowry death amongst Rajputs". The female rural literacy rate is 5.5 per cent. as compared to 34.5 in the rest of Rajasthan. Do you let your women work?" I ask. "No, but we won't stop them". "Will you stop them from Sati? The devastating effects of the "shdap" or curse are reiterated by some but the others are more candid, "It is terrible to be a widow". "Isn't it your responsibility to improve their condition?" I ask. It is easier to dialogue with the elders—the young are intolerant and easily offended. "Why can't they remarry". There is no answer. Somebody interrupts and remarks that Roop Kanwar's

father-in-law did stop her from "Sati"—"Is that why the "Sharap" of the sati has led to his arrest?" I ask. They appear confused.

The Hindu priesthood represented by the Shankaracharya of Puri and the Sati Dharam Raksha Samiti have displayed a characteristic hostility to female liberation from the practice of Sati reminiscent of the Dharma Sabha in 1829 which opposed the progressive reforms against Sati by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The appeal presented to the Privy Council in 1832 by the Dharma Sabha against Bentinck's Regulation outlawing Sati was powerfully denounced by Raja Ram Mohan Roy who appeared before the

House of Lords—all the Judges unanimously rejected the Dharma Sabha's contentions and the appeal was dismissed. Raja Ram Mohan Roy vigorously advocated that change did not mean destruction of Hindu tradition, in fact a reformed social order would strengthen Hinduism and make possible a Hindu Renaissance.

The sinister implications of the statement of the Sati Raksha Samiti Jaipur does no credit to Hindus or Hindu tradition. The statement submits, it is (a) opposed to forcible "Sati"—(b) Roop Kanwar's family members dissuaded her from sacrificing her life—(c) the practice of Sati is supported by the scriptures. It is for Hindu religious leaders to give guidance in the matter. The first submission displays an intransigence and refusal to

Continued on page 15

Earlier the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Mr. Harideo Joshi, took nine days to react to the Sati in Deorala and the Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi twenty-three days. The State Government not merely turned a blind eye to the twelve days long frenzied festivities that followed Roop Kanwar's tragic death, but it permitted four lakh people to attend the Chunri Mahatsav (vell ceremony) in Deorala, despite a court order banning it. Politicians, cutting across party lines, visited the Sati Sthal to pay obeisance to Mahasati Roop Kanwar.

An eye witness to the Sati reported to the Chairman of the Municipality Shahpura that Roop Kanwar had been administered opium before she was taken to the funeral pyre. Did Roop Kanwar on seeing the dead body of her husband spontaneously say "Mujhe Sat Banana Hai"? Or did her in-laws say to her "Ab Tumhare Mall Nanhi, Sat Banana Tumbara Dharam Hai"? Was Roop Kanwar reassured of love and support by her mother-in-law or was she considered inauspicious and responsible for the death of Mall Singh? If in these circumstances, Roop Kanwar passively acquiesced, was her consent voluntary or coerced?

act of helpless surrender?

### Literacy

I am face to face with the Rajput Sabha of elders of the village. They invite me to sit under a Shamiana for the arrival of Bhairon Singh Shekhawat. A peacock prances in the trees. As school girls walk by I ask the elders who have invited me to sit down "how many schools do you have?" "Almost 14". I am surprised at this oasis of learning in this vast desert of superstition. They have television too and they watch the "Ramayan" religiously and read the newspapers. To my query whether they gave dowry to their daughters they reply

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